

When Helping You is Hurting Me: Compassion Fatigue and Making a Commitment to Balanced Self-care

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Burnout vs. Stress



Knowing the Difference

Note: Excerpted from Dr. Archibald Hart (1984), *Coping with Depression in the Ministry and Other Helping Professions*. New York, NY: W. Publishing Group.

- **Burnout** is a defense mechanism characterized by **disengagement**.
Stress is characterized by **over engagement**.
- In **burnout**, the emotions become **shut down**.
In **stress**, the emotions become **overactive**.
- In **burnout**, the **emotional** damage is primary.
In **stress** the **physical** damage is primary.
- The exhaustion of **burnout** affects **motivation and drive**.
The exhaustion of **stress** affects **energy levels**.
- **Burnout** produces demoralization.
Stress produces disintegration.
- **Burnout** can best be understood as a loss of ideals and hope.
Stress can best be understood as a loss of fuel and momentum.
- **Burnout** produces a sense of helplessness and hopelessness.
Stress produces a sense of urgency and hyperactivity.
- **Burnout** produces paranoia and detachment.
Stress produces panic and anxiety.
- **Burnout** may never **kill you**, but your long life may not seem worth living.
Stress may **kill you prematurely** and you won't have enough time to finish what you started.

The Need is Great



The following statistics are a **snapshot in time**. Sadly, however, these issues have shaped much of our culture and society for generations and they are unlikely to simply disappear. Having an awareness of them, as well as their potential destructive nature can be instrumental in the caregiving process.

- There are an estimated 15 million *alcoholics* and 10 million *drug addicts* in this country. Of all family problems brought to domestic court, 40 percent are alcohol related. Of all juvenile delinquents, 75 percent have at least one alcoholic parent. Over 150,000 teens use cocaine and 500,000 use marijuana once or more per week. In addition, nearly half a million junior and senior high students are weekly binge drinkers. An estimated 10–15 million teens need treatment for abuse each year.
- Anywhere from 5–10 million people are addicted to *prescription drugs*, especially opioids.
- It is estimated that every addict *directly affects at least five other people*. In a recent Gallop poll, one third of those polled indicated they had suffered physical, psychological or social harm within the family.
- There are 40–80 million Americans who suffer from *compulsive overeating* and 5–15 percent will die from its consequences in any given year. Approximately \$20 billion is spent yearly by Americans seeking to lose weight.
- One to two percent of adolescent girls (close to 100,000), and 4–5 percent of college-aged women struggle with *anorexia* and/or *bulimia*.
- There are 2.5 million *pathological gamblers* and another three million compulsive gamblers in the United States. It is a \$500 billion dollar industry. The suicide rate for this population is 20 times higher than the national average. Approximately 50 million family members are said to be adversely affected.
- There are currently over 300 million *pornographic web pages* with an estimated 6–8 percent of the population diagnosed with some level of sexual addiction. Thirty percent of minors have agreed to meet someone they know only via the internet, and 14 percent have actually done so.

- No one really knows how many *workaholics* there are since this addiction has received comparatively little attention thus far. One study indicated that over 10 million adults average 65–70 hours of work each week. Several recent studies charge that many of the organizations in which we work are like dysfunctional families and force work patterns that promote and encourage workaholism.
- There are an estimated 15 million new cases of a *sexually transmitted disease* (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS, etc.) contracted every year. That's about one every two seconds. Of the top 11 reportable diseases in the United States, five are STDs.
- Of all first marriages in the United States, 45–50 percent end in *divorce*, the highest rate in the industrialized world. Of all second marriages, 60–70 percent end in divorce. The divorce rate has increased in every decade since 1860. One million children yearly have parents who are separated or divorced.
- There are over a half million reported incidents of *domestic violence* each year, and 92 percent are against women.
- *Suicide* among those aged 15–19 has tripled since 1960. There are almost 5,000 teenage suicides every year and for every suicide that was completed, there were at least 400 serious attempts that failed. Eight percent of high school girls and 5 percent of high school boys reported making at least one attempt. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among this country's young people. Of the U.S. population, 28 percent will suffer a major depressive episode (12 percent of men and 26 percent of women).
- There are about 800,000 *adolescent pregnancies* each year (over one every minute). This is the highest rate in any industrialized country in the world. Nearly 30 percent of all teenage girls will get pregnant at least once, and two-thirds will not complete high school. One out of every six pregnancies is a teenage pregnancy. About 750,000 of those will be aborted, 79 percent are unmarried and 80 percent will go on welfare. The annual cost is over \$7 billion.
- Approximately one in every four pregnancies will end in *miscarriage* (almost one million each year). Approximately 30,000 will be stillbirths.
- There are over 1.2 million *abortions* every year in the United States and the reality of Post Abortion Syndrome is increasingly supported in the research.
- About one in three children now live in a *single parent home* (30 percent). The rate has tripled since 1960. In 1960, 5 percent of all births were out of wedlock. By 1991, the figure rose to 30 percent. In 2010, 40 percent of all births and 80% of minority births in the United States occurred out of wedlock. Eighty-four percent of these homes will have no father in the home, and 40 percent will live at or below the poverty level. If current trends continue, the total number of fatherless homes created by unwed childbearing will surpass the number created by divorce.

- There are between 3–4 million *child abuse* reports filed every year with an estimated 5–6 million children who are actually abused (neglect–65 percent, physical–16 percent, sexual–9 percent, emotional–7 percent), resulting in almost 2,000 deaths. Ninety percent of all abuse is perpetuated by someone that the child knows and trusts and 60 percent involve children under the age of three. Estimated costs annually are over \$100 billion.
- Reports of *sexual abuse* have increased from 6,000 in 1976, to well over half a million in 2010. Most specialists agree that the problem is far greater than the cases reported. Over 60 million people have experienced some form of sexual abuse before they graduated from high school (one out of every three girls and one out of every four boys). The risk of developing substance abuse problems in this demographic is nearly 400 percent greater.
- About one out of every four children will experience at least one significant *traumatic event* before they reach the age of 16.
- Since 1960, total *crimes* have increased by more than 300 percent (nearly 14 million per year). In the United States, 90 percent will be victims of theft at least once in their lives (87 percent will be victims three or more times). While the population has increased by 81 percent since 1960, the number of violent crimes has increased by more than 550 percent. Since 1990 alone, over 250,000 Americans have been murdered, about twice as many who died in Vietnam, Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan combined. The United States has the highest murder rate of any industrialized country in the world (five times that of all of Europe). There is a greater statistical chance that a person living in Los Angeles will die from a bullet wound than from a car accident.
- The fastest growing segment of the criminal population is our *nation's young people*. In the last two decades, the arrest rate for juveniles committing murder increased 93 percent (72 percent for aggravated assault and 24 percent for forcible rape). About three million thefts and violent crimes occur on or near a school campus each year (nearly 16,000 incidents per day). Twenty percent of high school students now carry a firearm, knife, razor, club or some other weapon on a regular basis.
- Of all doctor's visits, 80–90 percent are *stress related*. Of all prescriptions written in this country, 25 percent are for psychotropic medications (tranquilizers, antidepressants, anti-anxiety, sleep aids).

Sources: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, U.S. Dept. of Justice, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the American Institute on Stress.



Dive Deeper

- Research indicates that pastors and ministry leaders are among the most frustrated and stressed out groups of professionals:
 - **40%** have had an extramarital (emotional or physical) affair since entering the ministry
 - **50%** of marriages end in divorce
 - **50%** of wives feel that their husbands entering the ministry was unhealthy for their families
 - **57%** would leave the ministry if they could
 - **70%** do not have a close friend, confidant or mentor
 - **71%** continually battle anxiety and/or depression
 - **77%** felt that they did not have a good marriage
 - **80%** spend less than 15 minutes per day seeking God
 - **80%** of adult children of pastors have sought some kind of help for depression
 - **80%** of seminary graduates will leave the ministry within the first five years after degree completion
 - **80%** feel discouraged in their roles (85% for spouses)
 - **90%** report feeling frequently fatigued on a daily basis
 - **90%** say their training inadequately prepared them for the realities of ministry
 - **90%** say the hardest thing about ministry is trying to lead uncooperative and unthankful people
 - **100%** had a close associate who left the ministry because of burnout, church conflict or moral failure
 - **1,500** leave the ministry every month in the United States
 - **7,000** churches close their doors every year in the United States

Sources: Focus on the Family, Barna Research Group, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Schaeffer Institute