# Self-Care for Preventing Emotional Burnout

## Navigating Online Activism During Quarantine

Emotional burnout or "emotional exhaustion" can occur when we are asked to invest more energy than we are comfortable with in our professional or personal lives. It can affect our bodies, our minds, and our relationships. Quarantining can worsen emotional burnout as we adjust to new changes in our day to day lives, and can also remove access to in-person support networks if we are not quarantined with them.

Quarantine has also led us to spend more time on social media to feel connected, and allowed us to participate in activism movements that have an active online presence. Activism is important to those who are distressed by the state of the world, and those who wish to support them through action -but dealing with societal conflict during the quarantine period demands energy we may not be used to allocating.

While it is meaningful to engage in discourse to benefit our community, it is also important to pace ourselves and be aware of our personal well-being. We can better support others or have impactful conversations if we are managing ourselves better. To help, we've put together this list of strategies to help you stay energized and capable of making the changes you wish to see.

### 1. Find a community that supports you

It can be exhausting to always feel the need to defend our passions, deconstruct the prejudices of others, or educate those around us without our level of awareness about a cause. Though it is important to try to share what we know with our friends and family, it is also important to allow ourselves to relax and sometimes be surrounded by people who already know and care about these

issues. Activism occurs in communities, and reaching out to like-minded people instead of being a solo activist can energize and motivate you in new ways.

Whether it is joining a Facebook group, following an Instagram page, or engaging in personal conversations, seeking out like-minded individuals and connecting with those who understand how we feel can alleviate emotional strain.

## 2. Pick your battles

It can be extremely fulfilling or validating to engage in a community that understands us or that works toward something that we personally believe in. However, this can sometimes attract negativity from people who do not have the same values. This can be amplified when we engage in activism online. We can come across hateful messages or things that make us feel angry and misunderstood.

While having tough conversations is sometimes necessary, it does not have to be all the time. We do not have to feel guilty about walking away from an aggressive discussion and revisiting it when all parties are ready to listen. When the negativity comes from people we are close with, including family members, it is okay to ask for space when things get intense and try to have a more productive conversation later.

## 3. Find balance and set boundaries

It can feel like supporting a cause is the most important work we could be doing, but it does not have to be 24/7 and use up all our energy. We need to save some emotional energy for ourselves as well.

Set boundaries such as not going on social media an hour before bed and an hour after waking up. Not being bombarded by digital content first thing in the morning or just before bed can do a lot to set a positive mood for the rest of the day or improve our quality of sleep.

## 4. Take care of your physical health

Physical wellness has a profound impact on mental wellness.

- *Sleeping* 7-9 hours during the night and rising with the sun helps our bodies adhere to a natural, comfortable rhythm. First and foremost, being well-rested is vital to feeling mentally energized.
- *Eating well* is also important. Eating colours found in nature (lots of greens!) is a good rule of thumb to properly nourish the body. Drinking water can help with headaches and boost immune functions.
- *Exercising* not only helps us move our bodies but it can also make us feel better emotionally due to the release of dopamine. Taking a walk or even doing a couple of stretches can improve moods significantly and it allows our minds to take a break.
- *Stay home if you need to.* Taking care of physical health also includes not attending in-person shows of support for a cause unless we are fully comfortable with the risk that it brings to us, the people we live with, and the people we will meet. If we do go out,we should be using masks and mindfully physically distance when we go outside.

Taking care of our bodies is always important, but when the healthcare system is already overwhelmed, we need to do our part to make informed decisions.

## 5. Don't compare yourself to others

We can feel that we are not doing enough; not posting informative resources as often as our friends, not researching as much as the other people on our feed, or not talking to our friends and families enough. But, we should not underestimate our own efforts and the difference that they can make. Comparing ourselves to others is an exhausting habit that can be difficult to quit, but every bit of effort counts, so we should be proud of what we contribute!

Suggested Reading:

www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm

For more stress management tools, visit: www.mypasskit.com

Our Eco-Grief PASS cards have resources for environmental activists and tips that activists of all causes can use: www.mypasskit.com/shop/pass-cards-for-eco-grief