

Autistic  
Burnout/Fatigue/Regression

## Definition

Autistic fatigue is a state of extreme mental, physical and/or sensory exhaustion. When the body's resources are overworked, it can result in fatigue. This can then lead on to burnout. Burnout is the body's response to being in a prolonged state of stress and frustration. Fatigue, and then subsequent burnout, can happen to anybody. Autistic people, however, can be more susceptible to both, due to the pressures of everyday life, having to navigate social situations and sensory overload.

## **Some causes that cause autistic fatigue and burnout?**

There are various things that can cause autistic fatigue. Several causes, including:

- sensory overload
- dealing with social situations
- masking or camouflaging their autistic traits
- suppressing stimming
- a sense of not meeting other people's/society's expectations of them.
- Learning demands

Changes in your routines or day-to-day life, such as a change of school, transition, can increase anxiety and can be additional causes for autistic fatigue and burnout.

# SYMPTOMS

These are some of the symptoms

Exhaustion

Withdrawal from social activities

Increase in repetitive behaviours

Difficulty in completing tasks

Difficulty in making decisions

Increased meltdowns and sensory sensitivity

Physical pain and headaches

Physically shutting down and loss of speech

Regression in school and at home

Difficulty with daily activities

Difficulty maintaining personal hygiene

# Support for autistic burnout

Identify if possible and address the underlying factors that contributed to burnout.

Remove all pressure and reduce expectations

Focus on doing things you enjoy

Have good/comfort food

Have people around them that they can trust and that are all working together.

Burnout means that they were living a life that was not sustainable.

Recognise that changes need to happen. Life may be different but you can still reach your goals when you are ready.

A breakdown period can take a long time and will take longer with more pressure and demands.

# Help for recovery/repair and change

Find things they used to enjoy doing – music, art, creativity.

Play, including gaming

Understanding when rest is needed.

Do things that aren't too challenging that they feel safe with

Sameness/familiarity

Visit familiar places

Involve professionals to reevaluate and create a more sustainable way of living.

# Professionals who I have worked with to support a student at Foxwood

- Family
- CAMHS
- Educational psychologist
- OT
- Post 16 social worker
- Louise from SALT
- Colleagues at Foxwood

Student X and how I have applied my research to help support him and problems we encountered.

All involved observed and monitored the student and reports, questionnaires and meetings took place.

He was eventually diagnosed with autistic regression.

We were then in a position to support and help the recovery process.

This is slow and ongoing but huge progress has been made.

The problem we encountered was identifying which trait was regression, behaviour or puberty. With our knowledge of the student we worked together to provide support and empathy whilst remaining firm with behaviour/boundaries that are acceptable.