



ARC Mental Health Information Series

This document is intended to be information only and does not replace the opinion of a health provider.

Parental Burnout

Parental burnout is the physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that one feels from the chronic stress of parenting. It arises when the demands of those who depend on you outweigh your ability to meet those expectations. Parental burnout has increased in recent years due to the increased stress from the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes that families have gone through.



People already experiencing multiple stressors, such as single parents, parents of special needs children, and immigrant parents may have a lower threshold for increasing stress because of the ongoing demands of parenting.

Symptoms

- Exhaustion, or feeling tired or drained all the time
- Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, or self-doubt
- Headaches, neck pain, and muscle aches
- A sense of detachment from your kids (loss of interest and joy in parenting)
- Loss of motivation
- Changes in appetite or sleeping habits
- Detachment, or feeling alone in the world
- Irritability
- Isolating behaviors

Those who are burnt out may also misuse or abuse drugs or alcohol. This is often done in an effort to calm down or numb out.



Causes

As a parent, your child's needs are at the forefront of your day-to-day life. From bathing to feeding and everything in between, taking care of your little ones can become exhausting. These feelings do not make you a bad parent. Here are the most common causes of parental burnout:

- Trying to be a "perfect parent"
- A lack of external support (nanny, daycare, extended family)
- Financial hardship
- A hectic working schedule
- Single parenting
- Too many extracurricular activities
- Supplementary needs for children

How to cope and recover

- Talk with your spouse, co-parent, or partner
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise
- Rest- if and when- you can
- Build a support network
- Be patient with yourself
- Take microbreaks
- Grow your parenting skills
- Pick a hobby and include your kids
- Focus on physical touch, hugs, and cuddling.
- Contact the religious community you belong too for support
- Get children involved in enriching activities and sports that allow you a break

Resources available

Support available for the family through your local maison de la famille.

Psychosocial support available through the CLSC and through your primary care physician

CLSC St-Hubert- (450) 443-7400

CLSC Brossard- (450) 445-4452

CLSC St-Jean-sur-Richelieu- (450) 358-2572

CLSC Richelieu- 450) 658-7561

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