

STRATEGIES FOR AVOIDING BURNOUT

*Berkeley Law Academic
Skills Program Workshop*



THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WHIRLPOOL

- Impostor phenomenon
- Catastrophic thinking
- Financial concerns
- National and world events
- Burnout

WHAT IS “BURNOUT”?

- Exhaustion
- Lack of motivation
- Alienation or detachment
- Frustration, cynicism, and other negative emotions
- Difficulty focusing
- Not taking care of yourself
- Being preoccupied with school even when you are not studying or in class
- Generally decreased satisfaction
- Health problems

WHAT CAUSES BURNOUT?

- Burnout is different from stress
- A person can be burned out in one role, but not in other areas
- Too much demand but not enough support
- Sometimes changing the situation is helpful, but not always

STRATEGIES TO AVOID BURNOUT:

CHANGING YOUR MINDSET

- Remember: burnout is not a personal failing
- Give yourself permission to rest
- Growth mindset
- Mindfulness
- Building and being in community
- Boundaries
- Self-compassion and changing the way that you talk to yourself

GROWTH MINDSET

- Success is not the result of innate or “fixed” abilities
- Fixed mindset leads to the avoidance of perceived challenges
- Growth mindset is the belief that skills are not fixed, that you can acquire/hone skills with practice
- Mindset itself is a belief that we can change



MINDFULNESS

- Permission to begin again, as often as necessary
- “Life is not personal, permanent, or perfect.”
 - Your performance in law school is not who you are
 - Things are constantly changing
 - There are things we can control; other times we breathe and let it pass

TRY THIS

1 Take a few deep breaths

2 Acknowledge how you are feeling

3 Connect with that emotion without judgment – name your feelings and welcome them

4 Extend compassion to yourself and others

BUILDING AND
BEING IN
COMMUNITY

- Community outside of law school
- Community within law school
- Building community in law school

“REAL” SELF-CARE VS. “FAUX” SELF-CARE

- Commodification of “self-care”
 - Self-care sometimes can feel like an obligation and one more thing to make time for and feel guilty about
 - Self-care in service to productivity and efficiency
- Reclaim “self-care.” Not a product or activity. Self-care as a mindset.

See [NT Times Ezra Klein Show: Guest Host Tressie McMillan Cotton interviews Dr. Pooja Lakshmin.](#)

“REAL” SELF-CARE

Four practices:

1. Setting boundaries
2. Practicing self-compassion
3. Aligning your values; and
4. Exercising power

See [NT Times Ezra Klein Show: Guest Host Tressie McMillan Cotton interviews Dr. Pooja Lakshmin.](#)

RESOURCES

- Student Services
- Academic Skills Program faculty and peer tutors
- Academic Skills Program website
- Wellness at Berkeley Law website
- Berkeley Law staff psychologist
- Tang Center Psychological & Counseling Services