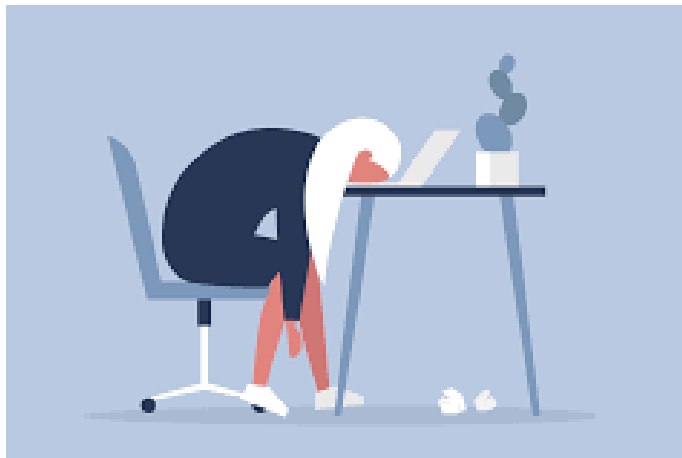


Burnout as a High-School Senior

Anna Zhong

Similar to previous years, where there would be a dread of going to school once we headed into June, this year, I felt myself dreading the month yet again. Having spent a bit more than nine months in school, I was in desperate need of a break that was longer than two weeks. I was sick and tired of the final stretch of assignments and assessments across all my courses. Motivation among my friends and me was low as we had all received our conditional offers and made our decision. Additionally, the conditional offers had criteria that were not hard to keep up with – many of them stating how a minimum grade of 80% or 85% must be maintained. I didn't quite see a reason to be working so hard without an end goal anymore, with the previous end goal of getting into different schools/programs no longer there to drive me.

Without even noticing it, I soon fell into a state where I felt guilty for taking breaks yet lacked the motivation and concentration to sit down and finish my work. Seeing as others around me were either also dealing with this issue or taking on even more extracurriculars and more difficult courses, I thought this was normal and refused to accept the feeling. It was almost as if I didn't have a right to be as stressed as I was. What I initially thought was a bad day or two, quickly grew into something much bigger, and I came to the realization that I was burnt out.



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Burnt out. While this phrase is tossed around frequently among many students, especially during summative season, I never quite understood what it was and what it truly meant to be burnt out. I often wondered how it differed from simply being stressed out, what were the symptoms, and how to overcome it. Defined as “a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by [excessive and prolonged stress](#), it occurs when we feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands”. [Burnout](#) differs from stress in the sense that stress comes and goes and is generally easier to manage whereas burnout stays for extended periods, making it harder to control. Burnout can be extremely difficult to detect with its subtlety and gradual progress. Still, it is crucial to keep in mind what some of the symptoms may look like and understand how to move forward from these feelings.

Burnout and its symptoms may occur in a variety of categories -- physical, emotional, and behavioural -- and some common changes may include changes in appetite, constant muscle pains, headaches, a loss of motivation, procrastinating or taking longer to get things done, decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. We must begin to recognize and validate our feelings for what they are, [understand how to overcome them](#), and seek help when we need it. Taking care of ourselves and understanding when to reach out for help is undoubtedly an important skill as pushing too hard too fast is oftentimes the cause of burnout in the first place. With just less than two weeks left till the end of school, hopefully, we all make it through.