Burnout at a Glance

What neurodivergent burnout is, how it builds, and what helps.

Neurodivergent burnout is a deep, long-lasting exhaustion that can happen when life's demands outweigh your capacity for too long, without enough support. It is not laziness, and it is not a personal failing.

Three core signs FROM AUTISTIC-LED RESEARCH

Chronic exhaustion

A tiredness in body and mind that a good night's sleep or a weekend off doesn't fix.

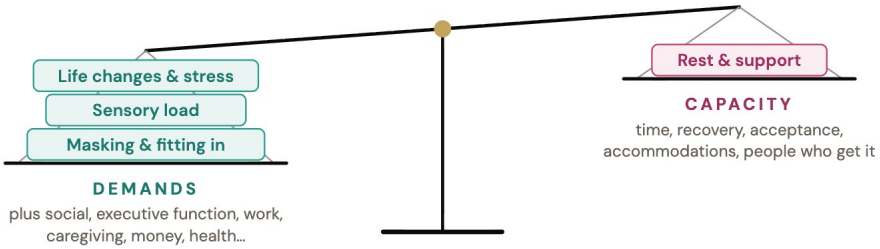
Loss of skills

Things you could usually do, like talking, planning, cooking or keeping up, become much harder or stop.

Lower tolerance

Sound, light, touch and people feel louder, sharper and harder to be around than usual.

How it builds LOAD VS. CAPACITY



Burnout usually isn't one bad week. It builds when the demand side stays heavier for months, and the supports that would balance it are missing or out of reach.

It's not the same as...

Being tired

Tiredness lifts with sleep and a few easy days. Burnout lingers, and rest alone often isn't enough.

Depression

Low mood and loss of interest are central to depression. The two can overlap, so it's worth talking to a professional you trust.

Work burnout

Workplace burnout is tied to a job. Neurodivergent burnout can reach every part of life, including home, senses and relationships.

What helps WHAT AUTISTIC ADULTS REPORTED

1. **Acceptance & support**
   People who believe you and make room for you.
2. **Fewer demands**
   Lowered expectations and real time off.
3. **Being yourself**
   Less masking, more space to be who you are.

Reflect: Burnout & Me

There are no right answers here. Notice what's true for you right now.

1 **Right now, how full does your tank feel?**

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Empty — Half — Full

2 **Which of the three core signs have you noticed in yourself, now or in the past?**

Exhaustion, loss of skills, lower tolerance… What did it look like for you?

3 **What's sitting on the demand side of your scale these days?**

4 **What, or who, adds to your capacity side?**

5 **If a friend described your week to you, what would you tell them they deserve?**

Sources: Raymaker et al. (2020), "Defining Autistic Burnout," *Autism in Adulthood*; Higgins et al. (2021), *Autism*. Most research so far centers autistic adults. Research on ADHD and burnout is still emerging, so take what fits your experience and leave the rest.

If you're in crisis or thinking about ending your life, you deserve support right now. In the US, call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline). Outside the US, contact your local emergency or crisis line.