

MDS Alert

Clip and Save: Ground Yourself with This Exercise

Battle burn-out with these suggestions from a fellow nurse.

All of your responsibilities can add a lot of stress to your day, and burn-out is becoming endemic to the working masses - it now has an official diagnosis code: Z73.0 (Burn-out).

The long-term care industry has an especially high rate of staff turnover. If you're feeling overwhelmed by the amount of assessments you need to complete, the ICD-10 knowledge you need to acquire, or the intensity of delivering care to a population who rarely gets better, take a break from everything to center yourself.

Use these exclusive tips from **Kara Karaoguz, RN**, pediatric palliative care case manager at **Lifetime Care Home Health Care and Hospice**, and life coach in Rochester, New York, to ground yourself if you need a quick break from it all.

"When you feel your energy dwindling, as though it needs to be replenished, take a moment to do this brief self-check-in," Karaoguz says. "Practice this exercise as you read through it."

1. Place one hand on your heart, soften your eyes, relax your face, breathe in and out slowly, sit or stand up tall. Lengthen your spine, let your shoulder blades move slightly down your back, and allow your abdomen to be free.
2. Notice where you feel your breath move in your body - chest, side ribs, abdomen. Are you breathing fast or slow? Is your breath deep or shallow? With intention, begin to breathe fully and deeply, with long, slow exhalations.
3. Scan from the top of your head, very slowly down through your body. Relax as much as possible, releasing any tension that you just don't need in this moment. Become aware of the unconscious gripping in your body and let that go. Particularly, in the face: Smooth your forehead; let your eyes, cheeks, and jaw relax.
4. Feel all the sensations you're experiencing, simply watching thoughts or emotions without judging.
5. Continue breathing deliberately and with awareness, just for a few more rounds of breath.
6. Allow everything to be the way it is, right here, right now.
7. Think of three things for which you are thankful and send out love to those people, places, or things.

"Now let yourself become aware of your surroundings, if you had drifted away. Continue moving through the rest of your day, carrying this peace and inner awareness with you, knowing that you can return to this self-check-in at any time," she says.