

What is AUTISTIC BURNOUT?

a guide from Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network



signs



- Lack of motivation (hard to care about goals when everyday life is overwhelming)
- Loss of executive functioning abilities (decision-making, organization, etc.)
- Difficulty with self-care
- Easier to reach overload or meltdown
- Loss of speech, selective mutism
- Lethargy, exhaustion
- Illness, digestive issues
- Memory loss
- Inability to maintain masks or use social skills
- Overall seeming “more autistic” or stereotypical
- May have period of high energy before collapse

causes



- Passing as neurotypical / suppressing autistic traits
- Doing ‘too much’, too much stress
- Aging: needing more downtime, having less energy
- Changes, good or bad (relationships, jobs, living arrangements, belongings, environment, routines...)
- Sleep deprivation, poor nutrition, dehydration
- Illness
- Sensory or emotional overload

strategies



- Time
- Scheduling breaks, managing spoons
- Leave of absence
- Stimming, sensory diet
- Exercise
- Massage
- Reminders and supports
- Routines
- Better environment/job/etc.
- Boundaries, saying ‘no’
- Dropping the mask/façade
- Solitude
- Absolute quiet
- Creative projects, passions, special interests
- Paying attention to reactions and your body