

Self Care: Preventing Burnout In Ministry

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Objectives of Self Care

- Create longevity in ministry
- What is burnout and why are ministers at risk?
- What is healthy self care?
- Challenge the obstacles to your self care

Profile 1-Coffee and Burnout

"We shared a cup of coffee...His trembling hand was just one of the symptoms of his burnout."

Profile 1- Pastor

“When they do what they are not designed to do, they eventually break.”

- I picked up a fork and explained that as long as I used it for eating, the fork would last indefinitely. However, if I began to use it to drive nails or dig trenches, it would soon break. The key was to use it for what it was designed to do.

Profile 1- Pastor

“His ministry was sucking the life out of him. ”

- His primary task was to supervise a dozen people and maintain operations. No goals. No projects. No time alone.

Profile 2-Female Youth Minister

"I Can't say no to the Pastors when they ask me to do more."

"I don't ask for help because I am the leader...there is nobody else??!"

"I feel angry if the Pastor doesn't show me appreciation."

- After months of physical illness she could no longer stand up long enough to conduct ministry.
- There is clarity about what is really wrong, however something is not working any longer.

Profile 3 - Christian Executive

"As an ex-gay, I have to prove myself better than normal people."

"Who will I be if I leave this work?"

"My boss is verbally abusive because the quality of my work is going down hill."

"I want to leave with integrity in knowing that everything is in order."

Symptoms of Burnout

- Chronic fatigue - exhaustion, tiredness, a sense of being physically run down
- Anger at those making demands
- Self-criticism for putting up with the demands
- Cynicism, negativity, and irritability

Symptoms of Burnout

- A sense of being besieged
- Exploding easily at inconsequential things
- Frequent headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances
- Weight loss or gain

Symptoms of Burnout

- Sleeplessness and depression
- Shortness of breath
- Suspiciousness
- Feelings of helplessness
- Increased degree of risk taking

Definition of Burnout

“The inability to sustain energy directed toward an expectation or goal.”

Robert Brennan

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BURNOUT AND STRESS

Source: Dr. Arch Hart

<i>Stress</i>	<i>Burnout</i>
Over engagement	Disengagement
Emotions become over-reactive	Emotions become blunted
Physical damage is primary	Emotional damage is primary
Affects physical energy	Affects motivation and drive
Disintegration	Demoralization
Loss of fuel and energy	Loss of ideals and hope
Body's need to protect itself and conserve energy	Grief engendered by the loss of ideals and hope.
Urgency and hyperactivity	Helplessness and hopelessness
Panic, phobic, and anxiety-type disorders	Paranoia, depersonalization and detachment
May kill you prematurely, and you won't have enough time to finish what you started	May never kill you but your long life may not seem worth living

Why Ministers are at-risk For Burnout?

- Expectations conflict
- Role conflict
- Ambiguity
- Autonomy
- Lack of control

Why Ministers are at-risk For Burnout?

Research Indicates stress is due to:

- Disparity between (somewhat idealistic) expectations and hard reality.
- Lack of clearly defined boundaries - tasks are never done.
- Intangibility - how do I know I'm getting somewhere?

Who is most vulnerable to burnout?

Individual personality characteristics of people at risk of suffering from burnout include:

- Young idealistic professionals who have unrealistic expectations about the work situation.
- Empathic people who pour too much of themselves into their jobs.
- An individual's reaction to stress coupled with their stress-coping mechanisms.

Burnout Research

Spirituality and Burnout: An Incremental Validity Study

By Golden, Peidmont, Clarrocchi, and Rodgerson

Journal of Psychology and Theology (2004)

Burnout Research

Spirituality and Burnout: An Incremental Validity Study

- Ordained United Methodist clergy
- 340 sample
- Median age 50 yrs. Old
- Average time of service 20 yrs.
- 81% male, 19% female

Burnout Research

- Workplace – 34%
- Personality – 28%
- Spirituality – 2%..report greater connection with God, less burnout
- Demographic-3%

Research Conclusions

We can conclude:

- Ministers are **EXTREMELY VULNERABLE** to burnout
- The degree of faithfulness does not determine the probability of burnout (only 2% contribution)
- Factors outside of faith are driving many to burnout

Why Ministers are at-risk For Burnout?

- Confusion of role identity with self image (derive too much self-esteem from what they do)
- Limited perks
- Multiplicity of roles
- Inability to produce 'win-win' conflict resolutions

Why Ministers are at-risk For Burnout?

- Difficulty in managing interruptions
- The 'little adult' syndrome
- Workaholism ('bed-at-the-church' syndrome)
- Peter Principle - feeling of incompetence in leading an army of volunteers

Why Ministers are at-risk For Burnout?

- Conflict in being a leader and servant at the same time
- Administration overload - too much energy expended in areas of low reward
- Loneliness - the minister is less likely to have a close friend than any other person in the community

Why Ministers are at-risk For Burnout?

- Conflicted Theology
 - Salvation NOT by grace
 - My Theology is by grace, but my actions suggest working for God's favor.

Why Ministers are at-risk For Burnout?

- Unmerited favor vs. Earned acceptance (disciples in field)
- Freely Bestowed vs. Conditionally given (Jesus tempted by Satan)
 - Undeserving receivers vs. Worthy achievers

Arguments That Sustain Burnout

- I will fall short of God's calling for me!
 - Truth. Jesus in the Garden
- Who will do the ministry if I do not?
 - Jesus and the Father
- I enjoy ministry, why not give all I have to the Lord?
 - Ministry is endless, you are not

Arguments That Sustain Burnout

- Self sacrifice is the ultimate sign of my faith
 - Jesus tempted by Satan
 - Sacrifice of self worth
- How will my team respect me if I do not give all I have?
 - Modeling burnout?

Maslach Burnout Inventory

Burnout syndrome has three distinct but loosely coupled dimensions:

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Negative Personal Accomplishment

Maslach Burnout Inventory

Burnout syndrome has three distinct but loosely coupled dimensions:

Emotional Exhaustion

- Feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted with one's work.

Maslach Burnout Inventory

Burnout syndrome has three distinct but loosely coupled dimensions:

Depersonalization

- The development of negative and uncaring attitudes towards others

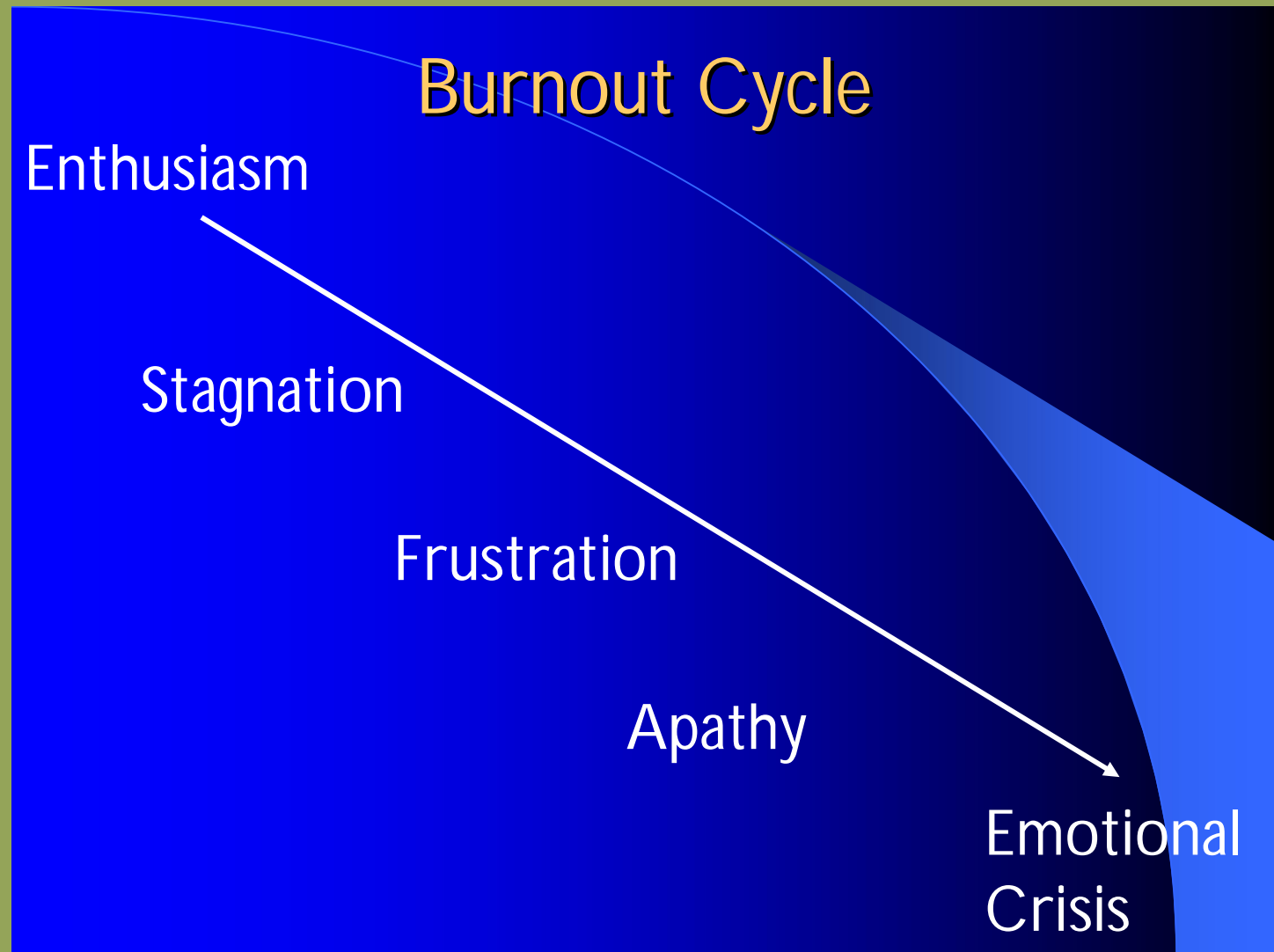
Maslach Burnout Inventory

Burnout syndrome has three distinct but loosely coupled dimensions:

Negative Personal Accomplishment

- The loss of feelings of self-competence and dissatisfaction with one's achievements

Stages Of Burnout



Stages Of Burnout

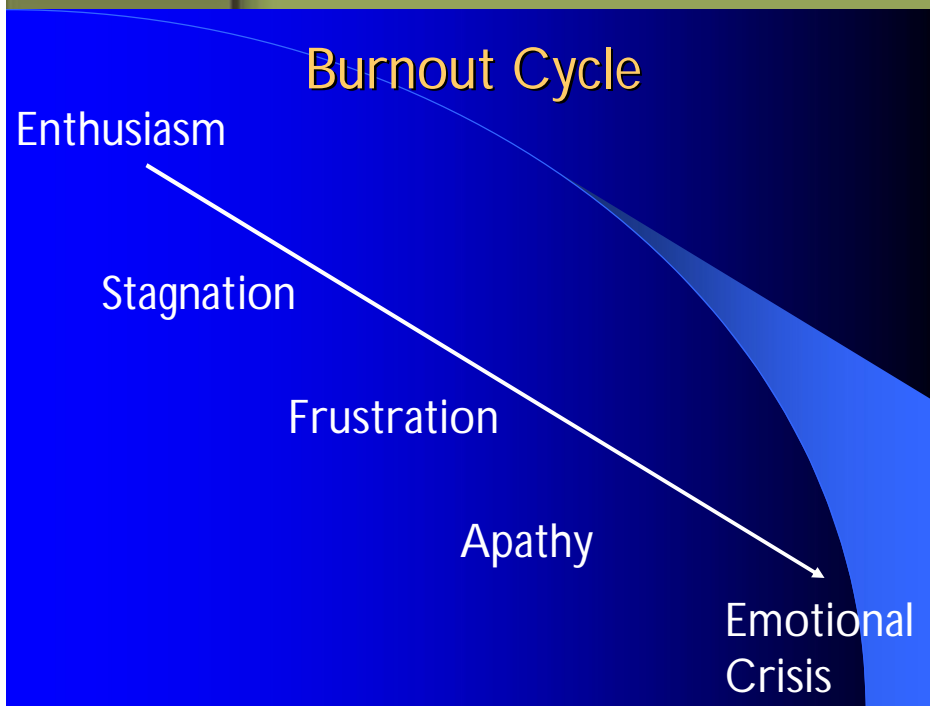
- Enthusiasm (honeymoon)

- » high energy

- » high hopes

- » unrealistic expectations / Ideal (burden barrier)

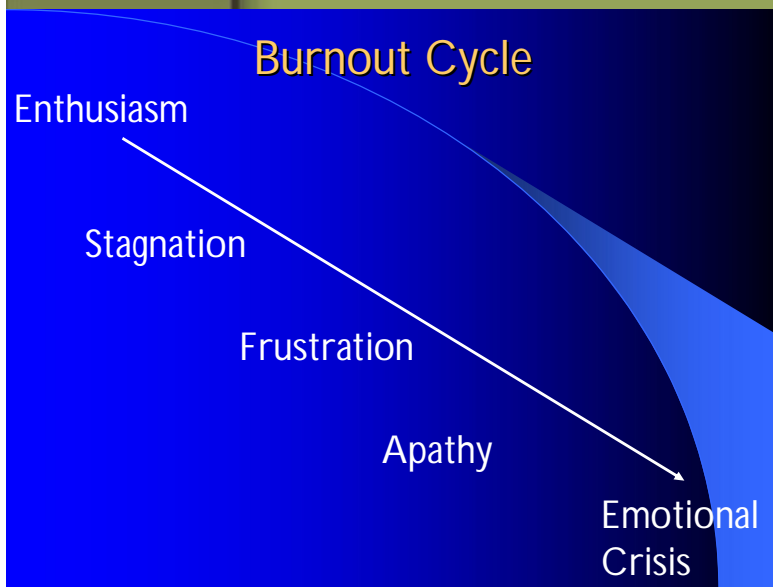
- » The expectation met is your ultimate fulfillment ("If I could just get there, life would be great")



Stages Of Burnout

- Stagnation

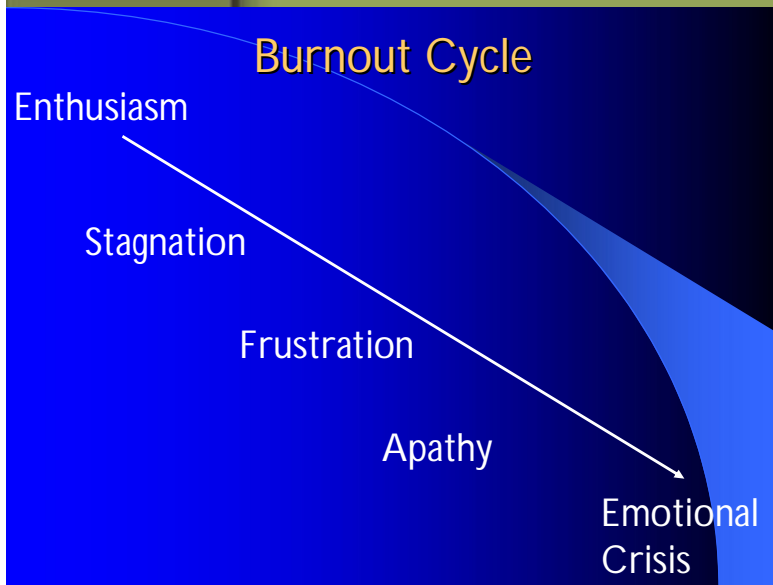
- » The experience/and stimulation is no longer enough to substitute for everything else in life
- » Reality Decreases the level of stimulation
- » Focus on self needs increases



Stages Of Burnout

- Frustration

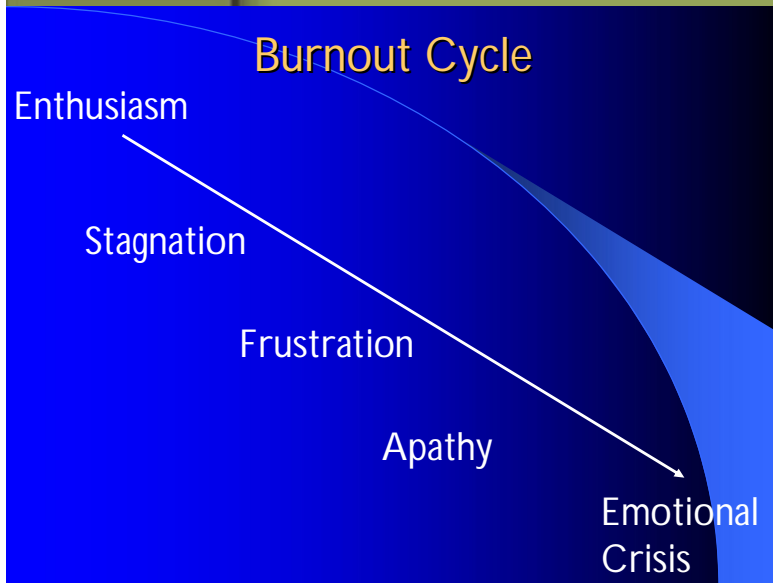
- » Personal aptitude to perform is called into question
- » Value of accomplishing the goal is in question. (An observation of the lack effectiveness)
- » Emotional, physical, and behavioral problems can occur (Tired, Resentment)



Stages Of Burnout

- Apathy

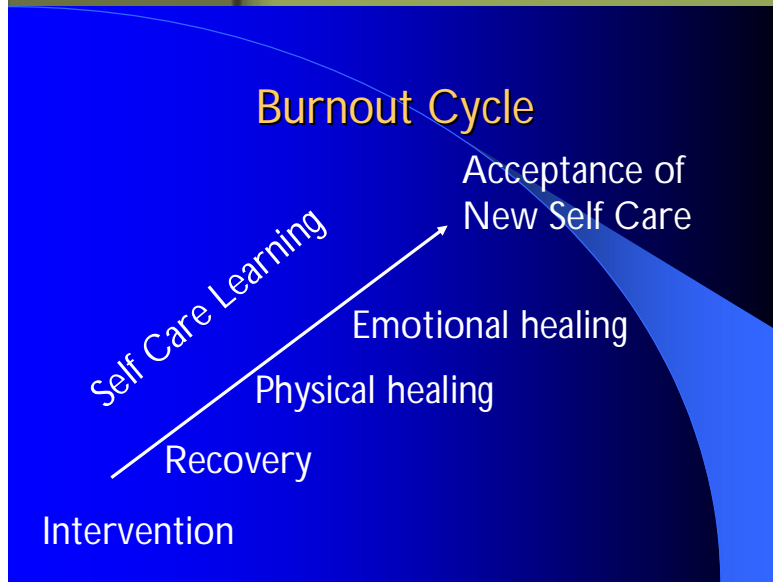
- » Defense against chronic frustration
- » “A job is only a job” (Cannot leave the job but must face it every day)
- » Exert minimum energy
- » Avoid challenges
- » Sustain the activity only for personal benefits (money, ego, etc.)



Stages Of Burnout

– Intervention

- » Breaking the cycle (leaving, changing the environment)
- » Seeking new stimulation that is meaningful



Recovery

Acceptance of
New Self Care

Self Care Learning

Emotional healing

Physical healing

Recovery

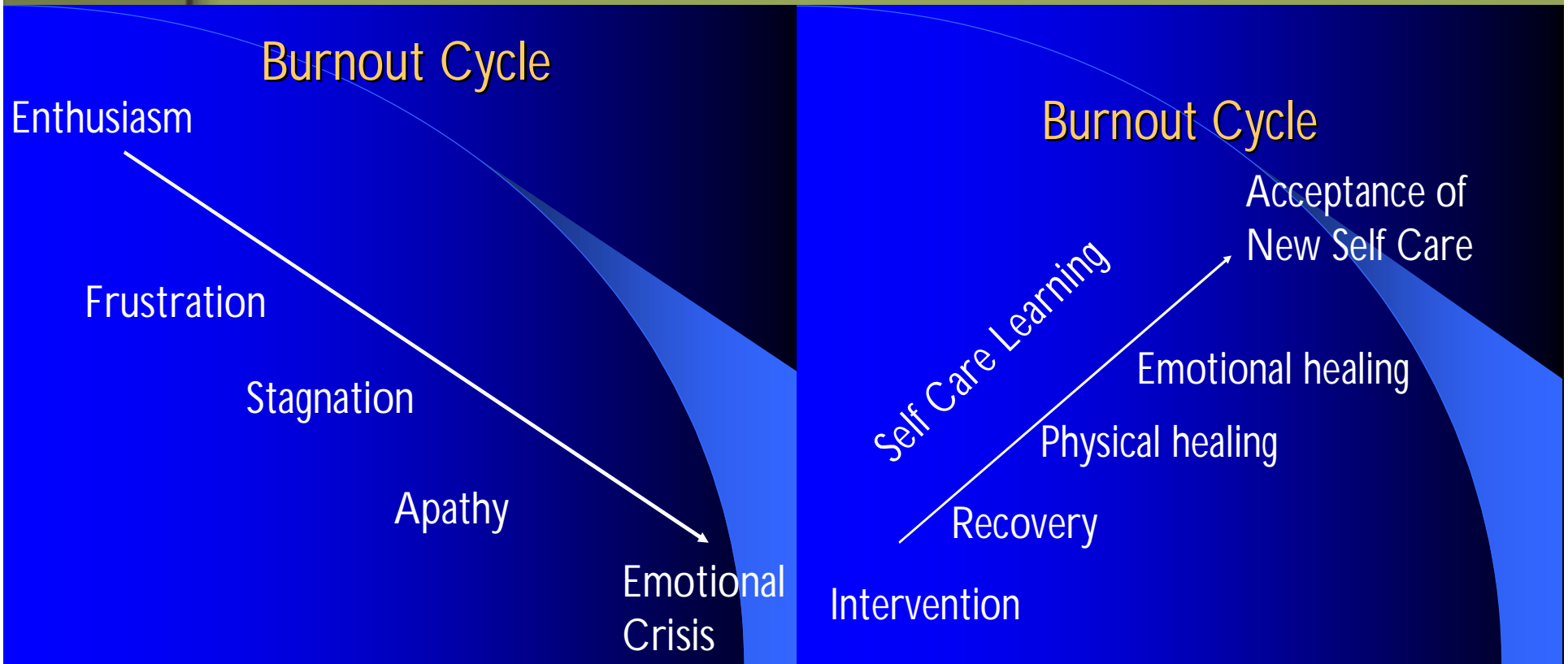
Intervention

Stages Of Burnout

–The Burnout Cycle

» Process is cyclical, not linear
(May occur several times in a single context).

Cycle of Burnout and Recovery



From Burnout to Self Care

Turnaround Questions:

- Does your family complain about the amount of time you spend with them?
- Do you have any “space” in your weekly schedule?
- Are you busy with ministry in order to avoid being quiet?

From Burnout to Self Care

- Do you work endlessly in order to feel valuable or important?
- What is the ideal picture of your ministry in its completion? What will you feel when it is complete?

From Burnout to Self Care

- Conditioning
- Connected in Relationships that care for you
- Compartments

From Burnout to Self Care

- Schedule personal retreats
- Add 20% to the current time allotted for activities
- Create a budget and manage personal finances
- Celebrate milestones in ministry
- Question the purpose and value of ministry activities
- Check in with your family to see if they are getting enough of your time

From Burnout to Self Care

Recovery / Self Care

- Live By True Grace. Stop Performing for Parent's or others approval.
- Reconcile long term tensions and resentments that destroy self worth.
- Express feelings of sadness and anger (maybe for the first time) (express feelings of what it means to carry burden)

Recovery / Self Care

- Forgive yourself for performing for others for approval and focus on accepting God's unconditional love for you. Discover in an new who God made you to be.
- Find Balance-Seek nurturing and direction for the Holy Spirit each day, it is stability for each day. (Relationships, enjoyment, faith)
- Respect the temple of God, your body.
 - Take seriously the signals your body is giving you, respect them and then take care of your body, mind, soul and spirit. Take care yourself, then take care of others.

Recovery / Self Care

- Find a safe group of people to be yourself. Practice healthy boundaries. Practice reaching out to others and receiving without conditions attached. (IVCF) (beware of false self Christian groups)
- Find things to do that bring rest, refreshment and enjoyment. Discover self worth that allows you to receive blessing and enjoyment.

Recovery / Self Care

- Emotional
 - What is my motivation for ministry?
 - Need to feel accomplishment
 - Prove my competence to someone?
 - Sacrificing myself for God?

Recovery / Self Care

- Professional
 - No other viable careers without training
 - Skills are transferrable
- Physical
 - Rest is ok and is not “giving up” on ministry.
 - Learning to care for myself allows me to care for others.

Recovery / Self Care

- Spiritually
 - God has not allowed burnout pain to destroy you because He loves you if you do nothing.
 - God has not left you.
 - God wants to minister out of “who” you are more than “what” you do.

Profile 1- Pastor- Recovery

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