

Dealing with Exhaustion and Burnout

A discussion guide for recognizing burnout early and responding well

FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS, COACHES, AND COUNSELORS

PURPOSE

Burnout in adolescents is frequently misread as laziness, apathy, or attitude. This guide gives students language for what they are experiencing and gives adults tools to respond with curiosity rather than pressure.

OPENING PROMPT

“When did you last feel genuinely okay? What was different then?”

KEY THEMES

What burnout actually looks like. Burnout is not the same as not caring. It often shows up in students who care deeply but have run out of the internal resources to keep going. Help adults learn to see the difference.

The hidden cost of pushing through. There is a pervasive cultural message that persistence is always the right answer. This guide invites honest examination of when pushing through is adaptive and when it causes harm.

Rest as a skill, not a reward. Many high-achieving students have never been given permission to rest without earning it first. Help normalize recovery as part of sustained performance, not a sign of weakness.

CLOSING PROMPT

“What’s one thing you could take off your plate this week, even temporarily?”
