



MCU Mental Health Matters

Symptoms of Burnout

- Feeling tired or drained most of the time
- Change in appetite or sleep habits
- Frequent headaches or muscle pain
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Weakened immune system and frequent illnesses
- Sense of failure and self-doubt
- Feeling helpless, trapped, defeated
- Detachment, feeling isolated or alone
- Lack of motivation
- Cynical or negative outlook
- Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment
- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Isolation from colleagues or loved ones
- Procrastination or reduction in time taken to complete tasks
- Using harmful coping mechanisms (substances, gambling, shopping, unhealthy food, avoidance, etc.)
- Irritability and taking out frustrations on others
- Feeling a lack of control over your life or work
- Avoiding work or coming in late and leaving early

Recovering From Burnout

Midwives are at a high risk of burnout. Long hours, irregular sleep and meal patterns, significant client needs, prolonged periods of stress, secondary trauma, and limited professional supports are common within the profession. Indications that you are at risk of burnout include most days feel hard, reduced concern for your work or home life, feeling exhausted much of the time, feeling overwhelmed by or disinterested in the tasks assigned, feeling unappreciated or sensing that your efforts are pointless. Intervention at this stage is essential to prevent burnout.

Recovery from burnout must be intentional and focused. Avoiding recovery puts everyone around you, including yourself, at risk. An inability to focus on our work as midwives could be life-threatening to the client. There are evidenced-based effective measures to recover from burnout.

- Develop social connections within the field to offer support and comradery
- Reach for those closest to you, connect, share your struggles, be vulnerable, receive support
- Limit your contact with negative people
- Expand your social network by making new friends
- Rediscover the value of your work- what brought you to midwifery and what do you love about the work?
- Strive toward work-life balance by finding times for breaks, time off work, being off call and focused on your personal life
- Set boundaries and keep them- learn the art of saying “no” without feeling terrible
- Take breaks from technology
- Strive for regular sleep when not at an overnight birth
- Develop time for relaxation, meditation, prayer, yoga, rest, movement
- Support your mood and energy levels with nourishing foods and supplements
- Find a therapist to support you in healing

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For more information about burnout prevention for midwives:

How to Prevent Burnout or a
Mid-“wife” Crisis in Your Career



Financial Stress and the Student Midwife

The period between deciding to become a midwife and successfully achieving the goal often has significant financial stressors. This stress can lead to insomnia, physical and health issues (headaches, fatigue, stomach issues), anxiety, worry, depression, weight changes, and coping behaviors that are out of character. There may be moments of guilt for the financial impact to your family of pursuing your dream. Coping with financial stress can exacerbate the challenges of being a student midwife. Questions may arise about the feasibility of keeping a car running, paying for gas and childcare, or paying the bills. Practical guidelines for managing financial stress include:

- Determine what you have in bills, expenses, and assets
- Create a written budget that includes income and expenses
- Set realistic financial goals
- Carefully track your expenses on an ongoing basis
- Reduce emotional spending
- Reduce expenses that are extraneous: determine where you can cut back
- Seek support and accountability from someone you trust and meet with them regularly to adjust your plan and budget as needed
- Utilize programs that offer financial coaching; many credit unions, banks, and nonprofit organizations have financial coaches available at no cost to you
- Utilize available programs for financial assistance, student aid, food, medical care, energy assistance, childcare assistance, and housing, as needed
- Generate additional income sources that fit with your lifestyle as a student midwife

Thankfully, this period of intense financial stress will end when you successfully complete your education and begin serving clients as a midwife. You are important to your community. Keep your eye on the end goal as motivation for the meantime.

CREATING A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

- Cultivate quality relationships with people who are invested in your well-being
- Be vulnerable with people who love you
- Show up when those you love need you and invite them to show up for you
- Communicate your needs
- Build connections with people and places where your needs can be met
- When faced with a life crisis, find a support group of others experiencing a similar crisis
- Connect with a therapist



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Calming the Chaos of Mental Health Care

Care Solace is available 24/7/365 to connect you to quality mental health and substance use treatment providers, regardless of insurance coverage.

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