

The Autistic Burnout Symptom Checklist (ABSC)

This checklist is designed for autistic adults, this includes adults who have self diagnosed or who strongly suspect they may be autistic. It is not designed to replace medical advice. If you are concerned about your physical or mental health please seek advice from your healthcare provider.

Please tick off any symptoms that have bothered you more than usual over the last two weeks.

Physical Symptoms

Feeling physically exhausted (not due to illness)

Feeling as if all of your internal resources have been used up

Feeling depleted

Needing to sleep more

Finding it hard to get out of bed in the morning

Cognitive Symptoms

Feeling mentally exhausted

Slowed down thinking

Finding it hard to think

Decreased ability to solve problems

Finding it hard to find the right words

Memory problems

Needing longer than usual to understand spoken language

Loss or deterioration of work based skills

Executive Functioning Symptoms

Difficulty with changes in routine

Struggling to plan your day

Finding it hard to start planned activities

Losing focus easily

Difficulty switching between tasks

Finding it hard to make decisions

Social Symptoms

- Difficulty or discomfort when trying to socialise
- Difficulty or discomfort when trying to communicate
- Avoiding social situations
- Talking to people feels like too much effort
- Difficulty thinking of how to respond when people talk to me
- Difficulty selecting the 'right' facial expression when interacting
- Discomfort associated with eye contact
- Not knowing how and when to make eye contact

Emotional Symptoms

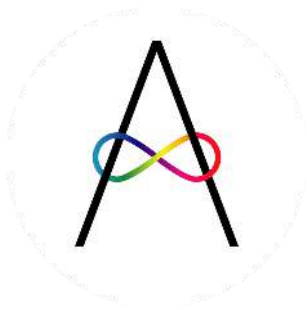
- Difficulty managing emotions
- Easily overwhelmed by my emotions
- Mood swings
- Increased number of meltdowns or shut downs
- Increased intensity of meltdowns of shutdowns
- Feeling at increased risk of having meltdowns or shutdowns

Sensory Symptoms

- Engaging in more stimming (sensory input seeking behaviour)
- Finding it hard to suppress stimming
- Being bothered by everyday noises
- Finding everyday sensations difficult to tolerate
- Finding everyday smells difficult to tolerate
- Finding every day sights difficult to tolerate
- Finding certain foods difficult to tolerate

Total Score

Date _____



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Notes

Autistic Burnout is a common problem amongst autistic adults and it is one of the most frequent reasons I see people for online clinical psychology sessions.

Researchers have begun to realise that people describing burnout are referring to a common set of symptoms that are distinct from depression and occupational burnout.

The Autistic Burnout Symptom Checklist is a compilation of the most commonly reported symptoms of Autistic Burnout. The more of these that apply to you, the more likely you are to be experiencing burnout. Even if you are only experiencing a few of the symptoms, this may be enough to cause significant suffering and disruption in your life, as such there is no cut off score. It might be useful to print off the checklist and take it with you to discuss each response with your therapist.

It may also be useful to score yourself on the checklist once a week to see if there is any change in your scores over time. This might help you decide whether a change in your lifestyle is helping or not.

There is, of course, some overlap between autistic burnout and depression. If you are feeling hopeless and like there is no joy in your life please see your GP or healthcare provider to discuss whether or not you could be depressed.