

THE BURNOUT ISSUE

DENTITE.

MODERN DENTISTRY

**APR
'24**

BURNOUT COACH
Kari Carter-Cherelus RDH,DA



"Buy Now, Pay Later" The Price We Pay to Become a Dental Hygienist

Dana Paladino, BS,
BSDH, MS
Owner of Dental
Hygiene Basics and
Host of the Dental
Hygiene Basics
Podcast



Do you remember life before and during dental hygiene school? If you ask most dental hygienists, they will tell you those were some of the most difficult times of their life. We all assume the golden ticket to happiness awaits us when we finally receive our dental hygiene degree. Yet, the rise of burnout in the dental hygiene profession suggests otherwise. Reflecting on my time in formal dental hygiene education, I started to wonder, does burnout start post-graduation or sometime before?

Dental hygiene school has the potential to create subconscious habits that might lead to burnout later in our careers. It all starts with the decision to apply. Seats in these schools are coveted and limited, which leads us on a journey to create the perfect dental hygiene avatar of ourselves. This avatar strives for the best grades, experiences, and reference letters to ensure acceptance into dental hygiene school. Errors and setbacks during this time often diminish our confidence levels and push us harder to become the “perfect” candidate.

That avatar doesn’t disappear once accepted, but often grows until it is difficult to separate one from the other. There is a unique dental hygiene subculture that normalizes the need for perfection, to never make mistakes, and that failure is unacceptable. Sometimes this is exacerbated by the faculty, but oftentimes these invisible pressures are placed on ourselves. These pressures combined with the unparalleled rigors, sleepless nights, and mental breakdowns are all considered normal on this journey to becoming a dental hygienist.

As a dental hygiene educator, I was very aware of the shift in my students from day one to graduation day. The students went from starry-eyed and fresh-faced to sleep-deprived and caffeine-riddled. After several years of this lifestyle, how can we expect people to shed these subconscious habits and become thriving, well-adjusted dental hygienists who understand balance and self-worth? The goal is to become a dental hygienist, but the price we pay is not considered until burnout occurs.

Is it possible that dental hygiene school culture turns passionate entry-level professionals into future burnt-out, hygiene haters? It is a question worth considering. However, with the increase of burn-out also comes an increase in awareness. The number of people sharing their burnout stories on social media alone are helpful in combating this issue. The rise in dental hygiene coaches who specialize in burnout also shows an overwhelming need for this type of support. I think it is important to consider where these habits start and address them sooner.

I encourage any students who are embarking on this journey to consider the stressors they will face and prepare for them before the first day of school. Finances, learning disabilities, and mental health issues should be addressed prior to acceptance when possible. A solid foundation in self-care, mindset, and spirituality can also strengthen a student’s resolve in the hardest of times. Just as we can learn to become dental hygienists, we can also learn how to care for ourselves. We can build a foundation in prioritizing our mental and physical needs before it is too late. With self-care practices, support, and preparation, it’s possible to grow from a dental hygiene student into a skilled hygienist who is mentally and physically prepared for what comes after graduation.

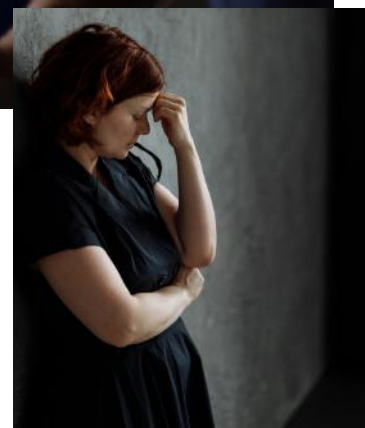
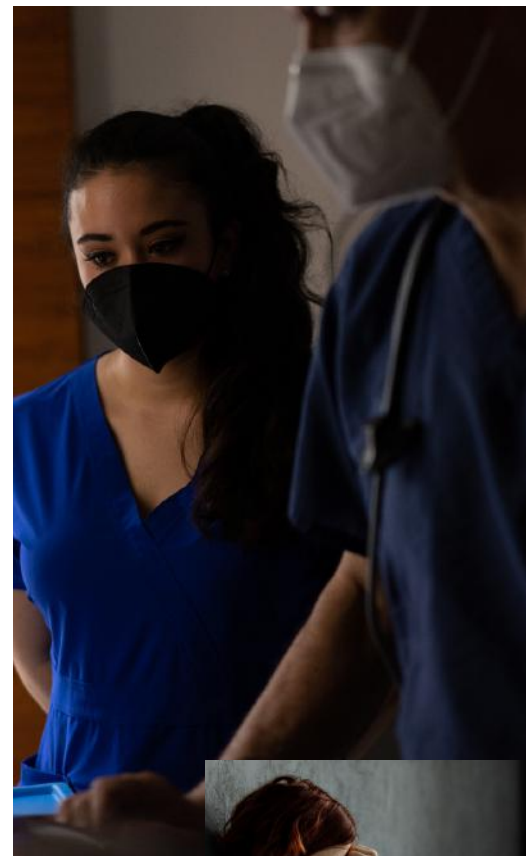


Table of contents

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

05

THE STORIES

07

BURNT OUT IN DENTISTRY
OR HATE YOUR CAREER?

25

29

Table of contents

NAVIGATING BURNOUT: A COMPREHENSIVE
GUIDE FOR HYGIENISTS TO RECOGNIZE
SIGNS AND FIND SOLUTIONS

32

TRANSITIONING FROM CLINICAL TO NON-
CLINICAL ROLES: A DENTAL HYGIENIST'S
JOURNEY

35

BREAKING POINT: THE SILENT
EPIDEMIC OF BURNOUT AMONG
AMERICA'S DENTISTS

38

THE 2024 DENOBI AWARDS
WINNERS

40

Table of contents

COVER FEATURE: KARI
CARTER-CHERELUS

46



It all started as an ordinary day, just like any other at university. We shuffled through lectures and practicals, exchanging tired smiles and half-hearted jokes as we navigated the familiar routine of student life. Little did we know, it would be a day that would forever alter the course of our journey.

I remember the moment we were called to that classroom by the head of the school. My heart sank as I walked through those doors, my mind racing with thoughts of what we could have possibly done wrong. But as we gathered in that room, the heaviness in the air became palpable, and the following words shattered our world into a million jagged pieces.

You were gone. Just like that, you were gone in the blink of an eye. The shock was suffocating, the disbelief overwhelming. How could someone so vibrant, so full of life, be gone? It felt like a cruel twist of fate, a nightmare we couldn't wake up from.

As we grappled with the reality of your absence, my mind kept drifting to all the dreams you probably had, and all the plans you had made for the future. We'll never know what kind of dental hygienist you would have become, or the lives you would have touched with your kindness and compassion. The world lost a bright light, a force to be reckoned with, and we're left to pick up the pieces of our shattered hearts.

But amidst the grief and the pain, there's a lesson that echoes loud and clear. The relentless pressure of school, the weight of our personal struggles - they can consume us if we're not careful. You became a tragic example that even the strongest among us can falter under the weight of it all.

Your passing serves as a stark reminder of the importance of self-care, of reaching out for help when the burden becomes too heavy to bear alone. We must confront the scourge of burnout head-on, offering support and understanding to those who are struggling, before it's too late.

Though you may no longer walk beside us, your spirit lives on in the memories we hold dear.

Rest easy, dear friend. You are loved, you are missed, and you will never be forgotten.

CARL DEMADEMA, BOHSc
Editor-In-Chief



Melinda Smith, M.A.

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest and motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place.

The Burnout Issue

The Stories



Volume 7
April 2024 Edition

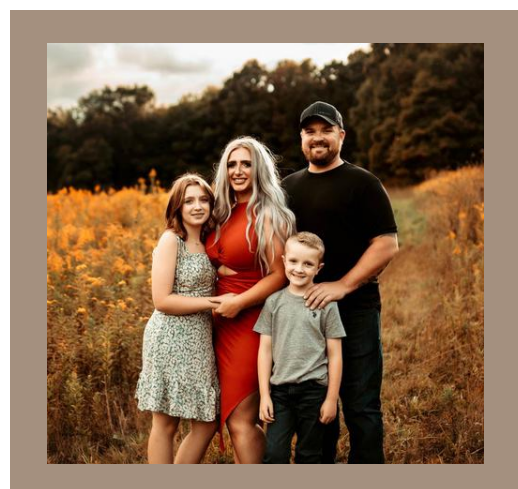
A close-up portrait of a woman with long, wavy, light-colored hair and black-rimmed glasses. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing text.

**Jessica
Carbaugh**

*Public Health Dental Hygiene
Practitioner |
Registered Dental Hygienist*

JESSICA CARBAUGH

My burnt out feeling was a slow burn each and every day but when the fire ignited was when I no longer felt confident enough, when I no longer felt like an asset to the team anymore. When you're told you can't do something that another hygienist can but yet you hold the same degree. That day I became no longer burnt out I became enraged with fire. After that fire though became depression, sadness, lack of confidence thinking to myself maybe I'm not good enough, maybe just maybe he's right..maybe I am not meant to do this..is it me? Am I not good enough? 12 years of pouring myself into a career that has no room for advancement, no respect as a licensed professional, no benefits or yearly raises, body aches, stress, outrageous student loans, anxiety all for what? No paycheck is worth your mental health, I was put into a position where I was made to feel as if I wasn't good enough to do something that I poured my heart into for over a decade, something that I never thought I'd walk away from after all those endless nights I stayed up studying in hygiene school, continually telling myself then to just get thru this schooling it'll be the best thing to happen for myself, make something of myself, help others and I believe I did help others, I made relationships with people I wouldn't otherwise have been able to do so outside of the practice and I believe everyone comes into your life for a reason, no matter how long or short that person is there it happens for a reason. I never had an ability to stand up for myself which I hate because it's something I instill in my kids everyday, but I had a sense of pride and self worth that day something came over me and I stood up for myself and I knew deep down this is it... this is the end it's time to move on. That's exactly what I did, I moved on. I still have a passion for dentistry, always will, just in a different aspect. I am still on a journey of finding my new found self and career but I know once it's a right decision for me something will come over me just like it did that day when I knew I was worth more, that same feeling I'll get when I find myself and new found career again.





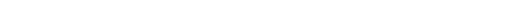
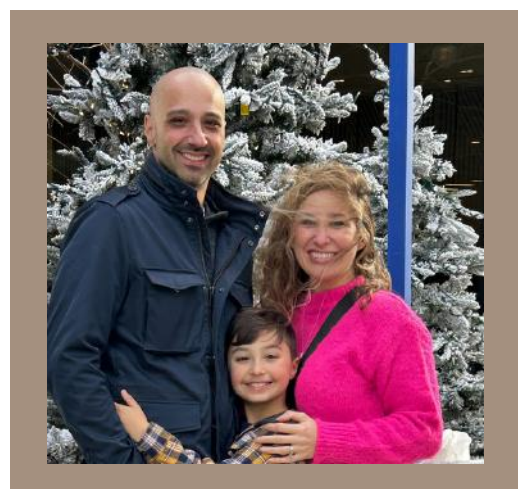
**Laura
Bettencourt**

*Dental Hygiene Coach |
Registered Dental Hygienist*

LAURA BETTENCOURT

My position on burnout is quite different than many. To the point that I feel as though my personal experience doesn't deserve to be featured in the magazine article. I have never truly experienced the brunt of burnout. I have many close friends, clients, and my business partner that have seriously dealt with it. I've witnessed them experiencing it. That feeling when you're in the thick of it where you can't even recognize the signs and symptoms or get out of your own way. Thankfully I have never been in it that deep. Yes, I've experienced the feelings for moments or a couple of days. I don't know the exact reason why however, I can tell you I have always been one that has sought growth and looked for opportunities that present themselves. I have found it helpful to be mindful in the fact that when I am starting to feel down, frustrated or just plain old blah, I take action. I take action by moving my body, learning something new, challenging myself in a new way that I haven't before. This has helped me in those hard moments of doubt, and dread. I confide in people I trust and talk out my thoughts and feelings. I truly believe that we are all a work in progress and we have the right to choose how we want to live our lives. Life is not easy and there are many obstacles along the journey. It's in those hard moments of failure, uncertainty and struggle when we grow the most and write our own unique story. I believe that is all too often what we forget about the most, what truly matters? Our journey and the ups and downs in life that make our life beautifully our own.

Thanks for reading about my journey. Please feel free to reach out to me at laurabettencourt.rdh@gmail.com to talk about your journey.





Danielle Avila

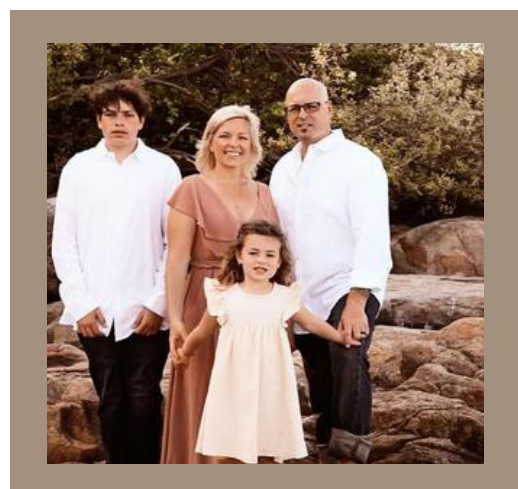
*Dental Hygiene Coach |
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CHEROKEE
DENTAL
HYGIENE

DANIELLE AVILA

I first experienced the feelings of burnout far before I could identify what was happening in my life and in my career. Looking back now, the feelings of burnout started in 2019, but 2020 was when I was able to recognize what these feelings meant. I was living in the hamster wheel of my career. I was a mom of 2, the effects of covid and the trauma that it played in my life were devastating. Harmony being my number one strength did not work to my advantage over the uncertainty of covid. I dealt with two miscarriages, the loss of my mother and the overwhelming load of patients that needed to be seen. Nevermind topped with the uncertainty of covid in my life, the team I worked with at the office but also the patients that I was seeing. It was at that time that I started to feel all the effects in my personal life starting to crumble. I was always so unhappy coming home from work, the stress was eating me alive and I knew that something wasn't right. I did not know that burnout was even a thing. I just knew that the toxic environment that I was in was contributing to my uneasiness and unhappiness. I knew that I wanted a change in my career and that there had to be more than the level of care that I was providing my patients. My Body was starting to feel the effects of stress and burn out. My mind was not in the right place, I had a scarcity mindset and at that time I had a hard time thinking about tomorrow. It was not until I had a call with a recruiter to talk about fixing my resume that I even thought about what I wanted in my career in the next two years. This was when the light bulb went off for me and I knew that I needed to make a change, mentally and physically for myself and for my loved ones. I was ready to make a change in my life and I knew that it started with me.

Please feel free to reach out to me to talk about your personal journey at danielle.avila.rdh@gmail.com.





Letitia Hill

*Dental Hygienist |
Founder of Sunday
Scalies*

LETITIA HILL

Burnout is a term that I overheard throughout my educational journey but I didn't really understand it at the time. I knew from a young age that I wanted to pursue a career in dentistry, originally taking the steps to pursue a career as an orthodontist. Throughout the process of obtaining my bachelors degree I started to realize that dental school was not the direction I wanted to go. I took a gap year after graduation to determine what my next step would be, ultimately choosing dental hygiene school. I struggled throughout dental hygiene school with my mental health. I constantly felt the need to be perfect and to get everything correct on the first try. A few months from graduation the Pandemic rolled in halting my education and delaying my licensure. This further affected my mental health at the time. Looking back I had been experiencing the signs of early burnout however, I was very naïve and thought that it wouldn't happen to me because I wanted my career so badly. Starting my career I lacked mentorship and found myself in a "non-traditional" employment position. I constantly second guessed myself and my abilities to provide patient care and handle difficult situations which led to me battling imposter syndrome. I also found myself struggling to set boundaries and stand up for myself as a first time clinician. After some time I felt very isolated and lonely.

I found it difficult to get up for work, it took a lot of energy to put a "brave face on" and face patients day in and day out. Often times I brought work stress home with me which created a negative space and affected my personal relationships. I stopped eating properly and I stopped working out. My days consisted of dragging myself out of bed at the last minute to get to work on time, treating patients, complaining about work stress on lunch with co-workers, treating more patients, leaving work on long phone calls with friends discussing our frustrations, eating dinner and going to bed. Over time I got tired of feeling stressed and upset so I took the leap of faith and started a social media page to share my journey and experiences. I used it as a way to find community and support. It has quickly turned into a supportive group of individuals, a podcast, writing, speaking, and mentoring new graduates. Navigating burnout is still a process for me day to day. Sometimes my burnout is triggered by new stressors. It's constantly a learning cycle and something that always needs to be worked on. Luckily I have been connected with amazing individuals that have shared their experiences with me and taught me so much. I wouldn't wish burnout on anyone, but I'm glad that I learned about myself through the process and have grown and continue to grow because of it.





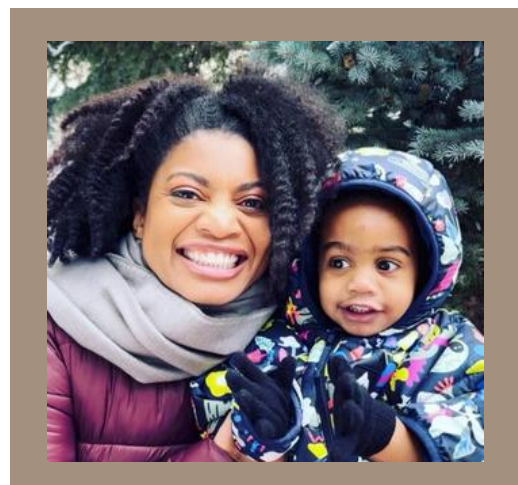
**Kari Carter-
Cherelus**

*Burnout Coach |
Registered Dental
Hygienist*

KARI CARTER- CHERELUS

Hi, my name is Kari Carter-Cherelus. I am a dental hygienist, a public speaker, an author, and a writer. A couple of years ago, I suffered from burnout. I didn't even know what that was. I just knew that I didn't like where I was working. It was toxic for me. I dealt with belittling, gaslighting, discrimination, micro-aggressions daily, as well as bullying. That's something that affects many in the healthcare industry. This led me to have mental health issues, as well as physical ailments. Sometimes I felt sick. Sometimes I was crying. Sometimes I had a lot of body aches and pains that didn't necessarily go away, even when I sought chiropractic care or massage therapy, or if I tried to correct it with different ergonomic means. It wasn't until I sought help in the form of therapy, as well as a coach, and a consultant, that I started working on myself and making necessary self-changes. I didn't find ultimate relief from my burnout until I made impactful changes such as leaving that toxic environment, investing in my career, learning to have a voice, and learning to advocate for myself. I do caution people that different personalities are prone to burnout, and I always say I'm in recovery. I always have to work on my boundaries, making sure that I'm not allowing others to dictate how I should act or what I should do for them. I always have to make sure that I'm not causing myself to burnout by taking on too many responsibilities, always saying yes, or continuing to be a people pleaser. So that's just a little bit of my story. I often go a little bit farther into it with the different articles that I write or in my courses. However, my story is relatable to many as it is similar to their own story. Many people suffer from burnout in the industry. That is why it is imperative that we notice the signs in ourselves as well as in others. We have to make sure that we are not ignoring different symptoms and signs that are present in ourselves and others because doing so can be quite costly. We don't want a fatal incident in ones that we love or ourselves to occur. We want everyone to seek the proper help that is needed so as to prevent, manage, and to recover from burnout.

Thank you for listening to a little bit of my story.





**Heather
DeJonge**

*The Relaxed Hygienist |
Registered Dental
Hygienist*

HEATHER DEJONGE

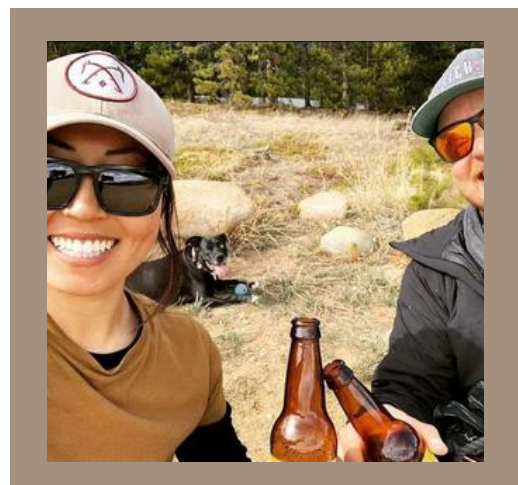
Looking back, I started to feel the “burn” about 7 years ago. I’ve been a hygienist for 15 years in May, practicing 5 years in my home state of Michigan before moving out to Denver, Colorado. I remember feeling tired- physically, emotionally, and mentally. I had been a very extroverted person up to this point in my life, but I craved silence and alone time. At that time, my husband was in school full time and I was working Monday through Friday. I had also started to struggle with health issues and I was turning 30, so I chalked my tiredness, my health issues, and my newfound introversion to aging.

That was not the case, of course. I became depressed from how fatigued I was from working and then keeping our little family afloat. My health issues worsened and despite the multiple specialists I saw and tests that they ran, my autoimmune issues worsened and still remain to this day, undiagnosed. I just wanted to be left alone in a dark, quiet closet.

My health issues increasingly worsened over the next couple of years. I was on restrictive diets to try to decrease inflammation- think: 30 foods... cilantro, plain chicken, parsley, and lemons. I had been an avid rock climber, snowboarder, yogini, and runner, but when I lost mobility in my joints, I had to redefine who I identified as. Walking became difficult, I could hardly grip my steering wheel to drive to work. However, my hands and fingers were still able to do small movements like those required for scaling. I cried a lot that year. Everything I enjoyed doing was taken away from me- I couldn’t even bend my knees enough to get onto my yoga mat.

Then COVID hit. My body and spirit were already exhausted from being in a heightened inflammatory state. They were also scared- I never knew what I could eat and when I was going to be able to eat. When we returned to work during COVID, I was scared. Already being asthmatic and having these undiagnosed health issues put me in a constant state of feeling scared, worried, and unsafe. On top of that, there was a shortage of hygienists so I was asked to work assisted hygiene. I said yes, despite knowing that it could push my body over the edge and it did. I became deeply exhausted once again, but this time there was fear and depression.

Fast forward a couple of years. My husband and I decided to try out the world of entrepreneurship. We had been working on our company for a couple of years, and things were getting really busy. I took a position at a new office- one that I had been temping at. I loved working there and the quality of care was superb. However, the days were long, starting at 6:30 am and ending around 5:30 pm with very short lunches. I was asked again to do assisted hygiene, and I said yes, but it couldn’t be every day. So between working 3 days of hygiene and 4 days a week, around 12-14 hrs/day in our company, it’s no wonder I burnt out.





No one had ever really talked to me about burnout; I didn't know the signs and I certainly didn't understand the gravity of its effects, so when I had a panic attack getting ready to go into work, I knew that I had to do something to save myself. That panic attack triggered a series of events. I developed an uncontrollable body twitch, crippling anxiety, and I had to resign from work. My husband, bless him, took care of me while my body and brain tried to recover. The best way to describe what my body was going through would be to say that it reverted to acting like an infant. It required food at 3 am and then it would sleep for 2 hours, then eat, then sleep- the cycle would continue until late afternoon. However, I was too weak to even feed myself. After a few weeks, I was able to go for short, slow walks outside, but I didn't like them. I felt vulnerable, embarrassed, TIRED.

It was a slow process, but one I would do again if it meant that it brought me to where I am now. During the recovery process, I became desperate for help so I decided to start working closely with a couple of therapists. I worked with mindfulness and breathwork coaches, somatic experts. And, I did a lot of my own recovery research, testing the different tools and strategies that I had acquired from the therapists and coaches- trying to figure out which ones worked and which ones needed to be modified to where I was in my recovery journey.

After I recovered, I decided to become a stress management and burnout coach for hygienists. I knew how prevalent burnout was in hygiene and wanted to give my hygiene family the support and help that they needed to get out of burnout. I didn't have the hygiene-specific help that I needed in burnout; I didn't even have the foundational knowledge around burnout. I saw my burnout needs spread across my hygiene family, and I wanted to help.

So, I decided to create my Instagram page as a means to spread burnout awareness as well as burnout solutions and stress management tips because after all, it's the chronic stress that causes burnout. However, I've found that it's hard to give hygienists the help they need to the extent that they need it. I decided to package all of my burnout lessons, strategies, and proven recovery tools into a Stress to Strength course, as well as create a community group that will give hygienists the tools, strength, and confidence to recover from burnout, manage stress to prevent backsliding, and also further their careers inside the op. My ultimate goal is to show up as the hygienist that I needed as a new grad and as a burnt out hygienist for other hygienists. We don't have to recover alone- we're all in this together.

Alexis Bailey

*Founder of Freshies Co |
Registered Dental
Hygienist*



ALEXIS BAILEY

my name is Alexis, and I'm a hygienist and the creator and founder of Freshies Co, an online Dental Care shop that I launched on July 23. I've been a hygienist for eight years, and I know burnout well. I still experience burnout now and then, but I've learned ways to manage it. I think it comes in waves and flows depending on how we take care of ourselves physically and mentally. But yeah, I felt burnout very early on in my career, even in school.

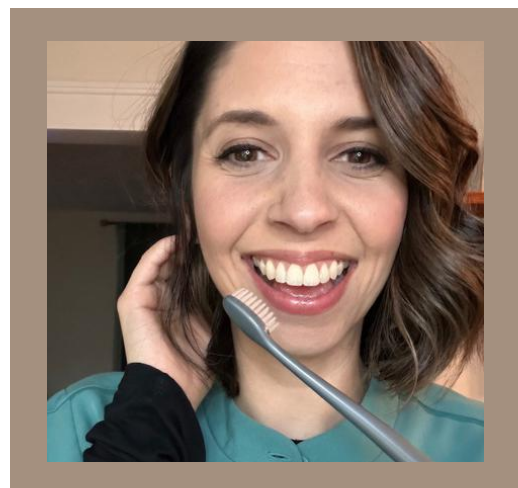
It started with a lot of pain. I always felt pain, even when working on my ergonomics. I've never talked to a hygienist who feels as much pain as I do. Maybe my body isn't cut out for this job, but I love it, so here we are. Right out of school, I got a job at a laid-back office. I had subbed there a couple of times, and it seemed very laid back. I thought, "This is great. I'll just come in here, coast, I don't need to impress anybody, I can learn." I didn't feel very comfortable as a hygienist yet, so I thought I'd just kind of slide in here under the radar, learn, and do my thing as I go. Not a good idea.

"Laidback" meant a ship with no captain. There was no captain. The doctor was so busy, just packing his schedule as full as he could, and the office manager was also busy with her own fires to fight. Nobody was giving any guidance. None of us were on the same page. When we tried to all get on the same page in meetings and whatnot and talk to the doctor and say, "Hey, we really need some protocols for this and this, so we can all get a little more organized," his response, as well as the office manager's, was, "Everything's good. You guys are doing good. Everything is smooth sailing. Do it how you want to do it."

That didn't work well for me. It was very stressful when you didn't have any guidance, and each patient was like, "What do I do now?" So that was hard mentally. It was very frustrating and caused a lot of animosity towards every employee. Everyone was doing their own thing and thinking that they had the right way to do it. It was a mess. It caused a lot of stress and animosity and anger towards everyone in the office. It was like a dark cloud of toxicity.

When your office is that unorganized, your patients know, and they're unhappy. I'm a firm believer in energy, so I feel it. When I have an angry patient in my chair, I feel it. I'm feeling the stress, and I don't enjoy that. It was really hard. We were always running behind, so ergonomics were forgotten. I would hunch over and try to clean as much plaque out of there as fast as I could. It was a mess.

I remember coming home in so much pain and just melting in my husband's arms, feeling hopeless. This is my career. I went to school, I paid all this money. I can't bounce around. I was 27, I already had a three-year-old child, and I had bills. I couldn't just go to school and find another job. This was my job. But I was in so much pain, I couldn't even hold my head up at the end of the day. Headaches, all of it. The physical plus the mental was just... I felt hopeless. I hated it.





Despite all that, I stuck around there for about four years for many reasons. All the same reasons most hygienists stick to messy offices. As much as my coworkers and I had our animosity about everything, I liked my coworkers. We were friends. It was like that survivors' bond. We're all struggling, but we're going to get through this together. We're going to moan and groan with each other and come back and do it again tomorrow.

I didn't want to leave them, and I didn't want to leave my patients. I had met all these people over four years, and I'm watching their kids grow up. They're telling me, "Don't ever leave. I love the way you take care of my teeth. Please don't ever leave." So I had that stress, and I just thought, "Well, this office lets me if I need time off, they give me time off. If my kid is sick, they let me know. They give me time off for that." But that's just normal human being courtesy. Any office will do that. It took me a long time to realize that.

It wasn't until I was on maternity leave with my second child that I thought, "I don't want to go back there. I can't. It's too much stress mentally and physically. I need something different and something better for my mind and my body." So I hopped around a little bit. I hated the thought of jumping around to different offices, but this was my life, my future. I couldn't live that way anymore.

I did find my unicorn office, though. I'm so happy at my office right now. Since hygiene school, I remember people coming in and telling us, "You might need an alternate career option. Don't forget, this is a lot on your body. Keep in the back of your mind that you might want to explore some things." I knew I was going to be one of those people that couldn't do this forever. I knew I wanted another job besides hygiene. I just didn't know what that was going to be yet. But I knew I didn't want to leave the dental field. I love the dental field. What we get to do is amazing.

Meeting different people every day, hearing their stories, just giving them care... A lot of these people don't get genuine care from a human standpoint. I enjoy that. I like to teach people little tips or tricks that maybe they never knew that are game-changers for their oral health. Once I had time to actually educate my patients, it became my favorite thing to do. I love educating in a way that maybe they've never heard before. Instead of just saying, "You gotta floss more," actually showing them what the floss can do and how it can help. I love that aspect of it.

And I didn't want to leave that side of dental hygiene. That's how I got to Freshies Co. When patients are just constantly full of plaque, it leads to burnout, and it's hard. I was racking my brain, thinking, "How can I get you people to be excited to brush your teeth?" You're supposed to do it, but you don't do it because it's boring. That's what I hear all the time. So I was on a mission to find some products that were not boring. I found so many great things, and nobody had heard of them. I got to get these things out there and show these people how fun it can be to take care of your mouth.

That was Freshies. That's how I started that. I hope one day I will be just doing Freshies only. It will be a sad day when I leave the clinic, but I'm not that sad about it. It'll be good. I still deal with a little bit of burnout. It's hard mentally dealing with patients and their struggles. I hate telling patients bad news. It's something that I have to get over, but it really weighs on me. The pain is just never going to go away. Some days it's worse than others, but my hope is that Freshies will become successful, and then I can one day just do that.

Maybe I'll sub, you know. I can't just leave my people, my patients. I love caring for patients, but man, it hurts sometimes.

The Burnout Issue

The Solutions



Volume 7
April 2024 Edition



BY
LAURA BRENNER, DDS



BURNT OUT IN DENTISTRY OR HATE YOUR CAREER?

Three years into my dental career, I suddenly decided I couldn't do it anymore. I hated being a dentist.

I constantly worried... would my work last? Would it turn out okay? Which patients were going to get mad at me today? Was someone going to sue me? Although I always did my best, I could never guarantee that the results would match the quality of my work. I thought if I could only be MORE perfect, then I'd never have to face those consequences

I constantly feared. This created a pressure that I couldn't sustain.

It all came crashing down in my 3rd year of practice, as I made my first attempt to address my unhappiness with dentistry. In 2004, no one was discussing burnout anywhere. It wasn't the buzzword it is today.

It wasn't until 2019 that I started learning more about burnout. I came across a **Mayo Clinic article**, and I couldn't believe how every single sign of burnout matched my experience for nearly *all* of my dental career:





Are you cynical or critical at work? Duh, yes.

Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started? Mm-hmm.

Are you irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers or clients? Yes, all of the above.

Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive? Yes.

Do you find it hard to concentrate? Yes.

Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements? Absolutely, yes!

Do you feel disillusioned about your job? Beyond yes!

Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel? Does an evening glass of wine (or two) count? They didn't mention Netflix. Yes.

Have your sleep habits changed? Insomnia every night, yes.

Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints? Yes.

***Wait a minute! I was burnt out,
and all this time
I thought I hated dentistry!?***



I began to question if an undiagnosed burnout pushed me out of my career. Other people did too. They asked me all the time, “Do you think you could have liked dentistry if you addressed your burnout?”

Just like in dentistry, without a diagnosis, you can’t find the right treatment. I sometimes wondered if I could have saved my career with a correct burnout diagnosis. If I’d had the right diagnosis, then I could have done the right treatment.

I thought that until I recently began to feel burnt out.

That’s right. I love what I do now, and I still become burnt out at times.

Just like you, I work A LOT! My work includes a lot of behind-the-scenes content creation and business management. My work never ends, and I could always do more. About six months ago, I started to feel like I was burning out.

I wasn’t making time for exercise, I sat at my laptop all day, and I worked seven days a week on this stuff. My life lacked that much needed balance that we all desire.

However, this felt different from my old feelings toward clinical dentistry. While I felt overwhelmed, I still felt a desire and a passion for my mission.

This felt like burnout, like I simply needed a break to get my life balance back.

That felt VERY different from the “burnout” I felt while doing work that made me constantly feel dread, depression, and anxiety.

It’s a fine line between hating your career and feeling burnt out.

That line is so fine that I believe our culture has muddled the two. Are we confusing hating your work with feeling severely burnt out?

The more I experience loving my work despite feeling burnt out, the more I believe we’re sugar-coating a career mismatch by blaming it on burnout.

Why would we do that anyway?

Because it's the easier thing to do. It's easier to stick with your career than it is to change.

The problem is, we might not be creating the right solution for ourselves.

What do you do if the burnout cures aren't working?

Now is the time to properly diagnose your dental career.

If you think you're burnt out, but in reality you hate your career; you're giving yourself the wrong treatment plan, and it won't work! It may help a little, but your burnout will never really go away

.The good news is, there's a safe way to diagnose yourself: fix your burnout, and if it works... great! You'll know it was true burnout. And if it doesn't work, then you'll have your answer: you may just be in the wrong career.

Here are 5 steps to help treat your burnout: Take care of yourself again. Maybe you've gotten out of the groove. Many of us get so caught up taking care of everything and everyone else, that we neglect ourselves. The low hanging fruit of burnout recovery is exercise, yoga, eating healthy, sleeping, meditating. That alone will help give you a boost.

If it works, you were burnt out. But, if yoga only works while you're in class, or the burnout comes back after a few weeks, you may not really be burnt out.

Change jobs if you can. For dentists and hygienists alike, tolerating a dysfunctional work environment can be soul crushing. You feel like you have no control in the decisions you make, yet you have this responsibility to show up and be a leader and a team player. That adds a lot of pressure and will surely drive your burnout.

Don't stay stuck! Make a change, and if that doesn't work, maybe it's not enough to make you happy in this career.

Take responsibility for your situation. If you're a practice owner, you can control your work environment, and it all comes down to you. If you're an employee, what can you change? Can you change your work schedule and cut down days? Which leads me to...

Have some fun! Create that balance that you need in your life. Be outside, get some fresh air, and connect with your creativity. Connect with friends or family while you're at it. Not only will this help your burnout, but you never know what doors this will open for you in your life. If taking a vacation leaves you refreshed and energized, then you were burnt out. If a vacation reminds you of how much you hate your life, and you counting the days dreading going home, then it's probably not burnout.

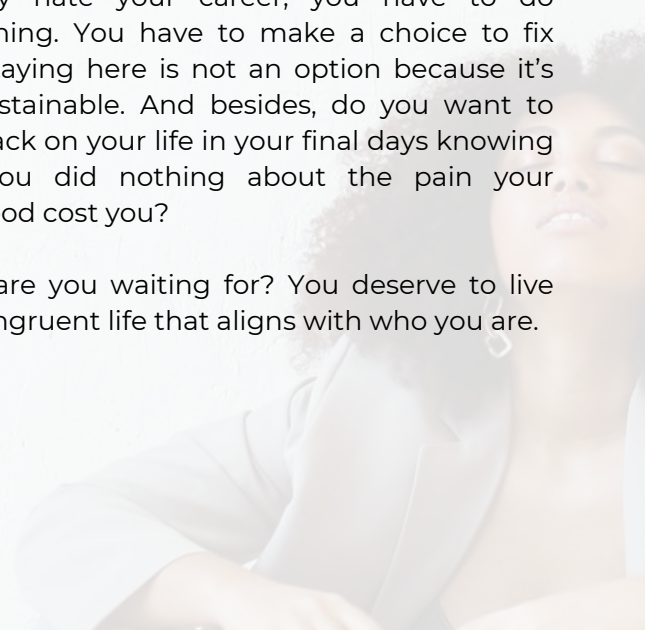
Create mental boundaries. Letting go of perfectionism and people pleasing will be the key to freeing yourself up. Get therapy or work with a coach. You don't have to do this alone, and having support will give you the clarity and the accountability, so you can actually create change. Getting dedicated support will save you years of your life, so you don't stay stuck spinning your wheels. And if the mental boundaries don't protect you from burnout, well, you know what I'm going to say.

And if none of that works... ...then you have your answer.

Finding out you are in the wrong career isn't such a bad thing, you know. Knowledge is power, and making the right diagnosis allows you to find the right treatment.

Whether you're burnt out in dentistry, or you actually hate your career, you have to do something. You have to make a choice to fix this. Staying here is not an option because it's not sustainable. And besides, do you want to look back on your life in your final days knowing that you did nothing about the pain your livelihood cost you?

What are you waiting for? You deserve to live the congruent life that aligns with who you are.





What to eat to Combat Fatigue for Busy Professionals

In the fast-paced world of today, where deadlines are constantly being chased and schedules are packed to the brim, it's easy to find ourselves battling fatigue and experiencing burnout. Hard work and long hours might be what is expected from you to achieve all those work goals, but maintaining good energy levels plays an essential part in optimal performance.

Although there are a lot of factors that play a part in energy levels, a well-balanced diet to combat fatigue and support overall health is a key aspect. Let's delve into the dietary strategies that can help one stay energized and productive throughout hectic workdays.



By Rhodene Leydekkers
Registered Dietician

Eat small regular meals:

Food is our fuel, and we require a good supply of energy throughout the day. We can optimize our energy levels by adopting a pattern of eating small, regular meals throughout the day. This can help to stabilize blood sugar levels, prevent overeating, and sustain physical and mental stamina by providing a continuous supply of nutrients and energy to the body and brain. By spacing out balanced meals and snacks evenly, you can avoid energy crashes and maintain focus and productivity during demanding work tasks.

Focus on nutrient-dense meals:

When you are battling fatigue, you might find yourself doing some research into what specific food you need to eat to feel better. But it is important to remember that it is not necessarily the specific food, but more the nutrients those foods contain that help to support your body. It is therefore important to focus on a variety of nutrient-dense foods like whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, and lots of fruits and vegetables to ensure your body is receiving all the nutrients it needs to function optimally.

Balance out your meals:

Balancing your meals will not only ensure a variety of nutrients, but will also keep you fuller for longer, and help to maintain your energy levels throughout the day. A balanced plate contains a combination of vegetables, fruit, carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats, and every item plays a specific part in your body.

Adding lots of colorful fruits and vegetables will not only make your meal look more appetizing but will also provide you with a wide array of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. These nutrients help to combat oxidative stress, boost immune function, and promote overall vitality. Aim to fill half of your plate with a variety of vegetables and fruit at each meal to support optimal health and energy levels.

Carbohydrates are our main source of energy. When choosing carbohydrates, it is important to focus on whole grains and complex carbs. These types of carbohydrates provide a steady release of energy, preventing blood sugar spikes and crashes associated with refined sugars and simple carbohydrates (white starches and baked goods). Incorporate foods like brown rice, bulgur wheat, whole wheat couscous, whole wheat bread, quinoa, sweet potatoes, baby potatoes, and oats into your meals to sustain energy levels throughout the day.

Adding protein and healthy fat (avocado, nuts, seeds, olives) will help to keep you fuller for longer and help maintain your energy levels throughout the day. Protein can also provide your body with amino acids to help and produce important hormones and neurotransmitters that play a part in your mental health to help boost mood, alertness, and focus.

Hydration and drinks:

Staying hydrated is key to fighting fatigue, as even mild dehydration can impair cognitive function and increase feelings of tiredness. Aim to drink plenty of water throughout the day, and include hydrating foods like cucumbers, watermelon, and oranges in your diet.





Supplements:

The vitamin and mineral aisle can be quite overwhelming, with tons of supplements promising all kinds of benefits. But supplements should never replace a healthy diet and should only be used to supplement areas in your body where there is a need. Over-supplementing where there is no need can be harmful to your body and can waste money that you could rather have used on proper nutrition. Therefore, before spending thousands on supplements, make an appointment with your healthcare professional to advise if there is a need for you to take any additional supplements.

Meal Planning Tips:

With hectic schedules and limited time for meal preparation, planning is essential for maintaining a healthy diet. Here are some meal-planning tips to help you stay on track during your busy days:

Batch Cooking: Dedicate a few hours each week to preparing large batches of staple foods such as grains, proteins, and vegetables. Portion them out into individual containers for quick and convenient meals throughout the week.

Snack Smart: Keep healthy snacks on hand to satisfy your hunger and prevent energy dips between meals. Opt for portable options like nuts, seeds, plain yogurt, and cut-up fruits and vegetables.

Simple Swaps: Make simple swaps to upgrade the nutritional quality of your meals. Choose whole grain bread over white bread, swap out sugary snacks for nutrient-dense alternatives, and replace fried foods with baked or grilled options.

Mindful Eating: Take the time to savor your meals and listen to your body's hunger and fullness cues. Avoid eating on the go or while multitasking, as this can lead to overeating and poor digestion.

In the demanding world of modern work, maintaining energy levels is crucial for success. Prioritizing a balanced diet rich in complex carbohydrates, lean proteins, healthy fats, and lots of fruits and vegetables, can help to combat fatigue and stay energized throughout your busy days. With mindful meal planning and smart food choices, you can fuel your body and mind for peak performance, ensuring that you're ready to tackle whatever challenges come your way. Remember, investing in your health is the first step towards achieving lasting success in both your professional and personal life.

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**By Danielle Avila &
Laura Bettencourt**



Navigating Burnout: A Comprehensive Guide for Hygienists to Recognize Signs and Find Solutions

Burnout is a phenomenon that knows many faces and touches lives in uniquely personal ways. Danielle's own struggles with burnout began quietly in 2019, a creeping shadow she couldn't name until it fully enveloped her in 2020. Amidst the chaos of being a mother of two during the height of COVID-19, facing two miscarriages, the loss of my mother, and an overwhelming professional workload, she found herself trapped in a relentless cycle of stress and despair. Her innate drive for harmony was tested beyond its limits against the backdrop of uncertainty and grief. The physical and mental toll was undeniable, manifesting in a profound sense of unhappiness and a pervasive scarcity mindset that clouded her ability to envision a hopeful future. It wasn't until a transformative conversation with Laura about her career aspirations that she realized the need for a fundamental change in her life.



Conversely, Laura's perspective on burnout diverges from the depths of despair many associate with it. She has been fortunate enough to never fully succumb to the grasp of burnout thanks to a proactive approach to personal growth and well-being. By recognizing the early signs of distress—those moments of doubt and dread—Laura has learned to counteract them with action, whether through physical movement, acquiring new knowledge, or facing new challenges. This proactive stance, coupled with the support of trusted confidantes, has shielded her from the worst of burnout, reinforcing her belief in our capacity to shape our lives and grow through adversity.

These contrasting experiences with burnout underscore the complex, multifaceted nature of the challenge. While Laura's personal journey may not mirror the intensity of the struggle faced by others, it reveals the diverse strategies and paths to overcoming or avoiding burnout. From the depths of despair to the proactive avoidance of burnout's grip, our stories highlight the power of individual agency, the importance of seeking support, and the transformative potential of coaching.

We are going to delve into how coaching strategies offer a beacon of hope for those engulfed by burnout, as well as those looking to prevent its onset. Drawing on personal anecdotes and professional insights, we explore the pivotal role of self-awareness, resilience, and targeted action in navigating the complex terrain of burnout.

Through coaching, individuals can learn to identify their limits, set healthy boundaries, and cultivate a mindset oriented towards growth and well-being.

Whether you're deep in the throes of burnout or looking to fortify yourself against future challenges, coaching offers tools and perspectives essential for crafting a more balanced, fulfilling life.

We all know that in the fast-paced world of dental hygiene, burnout can creep up on even the most dedicated professionals. Long hours, demanding schedules, and the pressure to deliver exceptional care can take a toll on physical and mental well-being. However, recognizing the signs of burnout and taking proactive steps to address it can make all the difference in maintaining a fulfilling and sustainable career. L'Diamante Dental Coaching (LD Coaching) helps hygienists understand the signs of burnout, explore effective strategies for prevention, and provide resources to navigate this challenging terrain.

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged excessive and prolonged stress. It is characterized by feelings of detachment, cynicism, and a decreased sense of accomplishment. Hygienists may experience burnout when they feel overwhelmed by the demands of their profession and unable to cope with the pressures they face on a daily basis.

The Importance of Recognizing the Signs:

At LD Coaching, we understand the importance of supporting our clients through every aspect of their professional journey, including navigating burnout. Through personalized coaching sessions, we work with hygienists to recognize the signs of burnout and develop practical strategies to prevent it from taking hold. Hygienists need to recognize the signs of burnout so they can take proactive steps to address it. Common indicators include:

Emotional Exhaustion: Feeling drained, depleted, and emotionally exhausted by work.

Depersonalization: Developing negative or cynical attitudes towards work and patients.

Reduced Sense of Accomplishment: Feeling ineffective and unproductive, even when performing well.

Other signs may include physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and insomnia, as well as behavioral changes such as increased absenteeism and decreased job satisfaction. By paying attention to these warning signs, hygienists can take action to prevent burnout from escalating.



Let's Talk about Strategies for Prevention:

Preventing burnout requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both individual and organizational factors. One key strategy is prioritizing self-care and well-being. This may involve:

Setting Boundaries: Establishing clear boundaries around work hours and responsibilities to prevent overwork and promote work-life balance.

Practicing Mindfulness: Incorporating mindfulness and relaxation techniques into daily routines to reduce stress and promote emotional resilience. Engaging in Self-Reflection means taking time to reflect on personal values, goals, and priorities to ensure alignment with one's professional aspirations.

Seeking Support: Reaching out to colleagues, mentors, or professional coaches for guidance and support when navigating challenging situations.

In addition to individual strategies, creating a supportive work environment is essential for preventing burnout. This may involve:

Promoting Open Communication: Encouraging hygienists to express their concerns and seek help when needed without fear of judgment or reprisal.

Providing Professional Development Opportunities: Offering training and education programs to help hygienists enhance their skills and expand their knowledge base.

Fostering a Culture of Appreciation: Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of hygienists to create a sense of belonging and appreciation within the workplace.

Burnout is a significant concern for hygienists, but it is not inevitable. By recognizing the signs of burnout, prioritizing self-care, and accessing support resources, hygienists can prevent burnout from taking hold and maintain a fulfilling and sustainable career. Remember, your well-being is worth investing in, and you deserve to live a life filled with purpose, passion, and vitality. Do you need guidance on navigating burnout? Please feel free to reach out to Danielle Avila and Laura Bettencourt with LD Coaching at hello@ldiamantecoaching.com or visit our website at www.ldiamantecoaching.com.

Transitioning from Clinical to Non-Clinical Roles: A Dental Hygienist's Journey

By Allison Norris



In the world of dentistry, there has been a noticeable shift in empowerment among clinicians, with many recognizing and acknowledging the allure of non-clinical career paths. This trend reflects a desire among dental professionals to escape the confines of traditional clinical practice and explore new avenues for personal and professional growth. However, before making the leap into non-clinical roles, there are several factors to consider. Understanding the journey of individuals like Sarah, a dental hygienist seeking to transition into a non-clinical career, can offer valuable insights and guidance for those looking to embark on a similar path.



Meet Sarah: A Dental Hygienist Seeking Change

Sarah's story begins like many others in the dental profession. As a dental hygienist, her passion for her work and dedication to her patients were evident to all who knew her. Patients admired her warm demeanor, while colleagues respected her commitment to providing top-notch care. However, as the years passed, Sarah began to experience signs of burnout. The repetitive nature of her clinical duties left her feeling constrained and unfulfilled. She longed for professional growth and craved opportunities to challenge herself intellectually and creatively.

Recognizing the need for change, Sarah embarked on a journey of self-discovery. She researched alternative career paths, attended seminars, and sought guidance from mentors. Despite encountering obstacles along the way, Sarah remained determined to explore non-clinical opportunities that would allow her to make a meaningful impact beyond the confines of traditional dentistry.

Navigating the Transition:

Sarah's transition from clinical to non-clinical roles was not without its challenges. However, through perseverance and resilience, she was able to overcome obstacles and forge a new path for herself. Here are some key lessons that Sarah learned along the way, which may offer valuable insights for dental hygienists looking to make a similar transition:

Self-Discovery and Research: Before embarking on any career transition, it's essential to take the time to reflect on your interests, values, and goals. Sarah's journey began with self-reflection and extensive research into various non-clinical career paths available to dental professionals.

Networking and Building Relationships: As a natural relationship builder, Sarah recognized the power of networking in advancing her career aspirations. She revamped her LinkedIn profile to showcase her skills and experience beyond clinical dentistry and actively sought out opportunities to connect with professionals in her desired field.

Continuous Learning and Professional Development: Sarah understood the importance of continuous self-improvement in preparing for a non-clinical career. She enrolled in courses and sought out opportunities to expand her skill set, leveraging her clinical expertise to align with the demands of her desired role.

Resilience in the Face of Setbacks: Transitioning to a non-clinical career path inevitably comes with its fair share of challenges and setbacks. Rejection can be disheartening, but Sarah refused to let setbacks define her. Instead, she viewed failure as an opportunity for growth and used it as a catalyst to propel herself forward.

Sarah's journey from clinical to non-clinical roles serves as a testament to the possibilities that await dental professionals seeking to explore alternative career paths. By embracing self-discovery, networking, continuous learning, resilience, and a growth mindset, dental hygienists can successfully navigate the transition to non-clinical roles and unlock new opportunities for personal and professional fulfillment. While the journey may be challenging, the rewards of stepping outside the confines of traditional clinical practice are well worth the effort.



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By Ellie Halabian, DDS

BREAKING POINT: THE SILENT EPIDEMIC OF BURNOUT AMONG AMERICA'S DENTISTS

What does it mean to be a dentist? One may say it means to be a community leader, an educator, a healer. These are all beautiful descriptions of our profession but then, why does it also feel so painful?

Going into the profession, most of us are unaware of the physical and emotional pain that comes along with the profession. I, for one, had shadowed dentists prior to choosing dentistry as a career and I do not recall anyone complaining of back pain or difficult patients or troubling procedures. Nor did any of my professors share stories about strenuous days in the practice.





So when I graduated residency, I thought my life as a practicing clinician would be a comfortable one but my first job proved me wrong. My first job was in public health and the notion to serve was rooted in treating volume but after one year of clinical practice, I found myself diagnosed with alopecia, partial hair loss. I took this physical sign of burnout as an opportunity to cut back from dentistry in order to address my health.

Interestingly, I am not the only one affected by burnout. A notable study from the Journal of the American Dental Association (2015) provides insights into this topic is "Burnout and Career Satisfaction Among US Dentists". The study aimed to assess burnout and career satisfaction among dentists in the U.S. and involved surveying over 2,000 dentists across the country and analyzing their responses to questions related to burnout, career satisfaction, workload, and other factors.

The findings of the study revealed that a significant proportion of dentists experience burnout, with around 70% reporting symptoms of burnout at various levels but the bigger question is why are we feeling this way? Below are four reasons that contribute to burnout:

High workload

If you're working for an insurance-based practice then, it's all about volume because of poor reimbursement rates. You're forced to pack your day in order to produce the most. And while you're keeping busy, your take home doesn't satisfy the rising costs of living.

Pride

Consequently, that high workload ends up with you falling behind schedule, which prevents you from creating work that you're proud of, and as perfectionists, we end up being our own worst critic.

Physical pain

Similarly, seeing a high volume of patients means two things: we're running between operatories and spending the entire day hunched over. Throughout the day, the tension builds in our neck, shoulders, and back. Eventually, this tension is compounded over the length of the work week. Repeatedly poor ergonomics can result in serious injury and ultimately, compromise your dental career.

Emotional pain

How many times have you heard a patient say, "I'm scared of the dentist". Not only do we have to manage our patients' emotions but each time they complain in the chair, we take their comments as criticism and internalize them. Eventually, feeling underappreciated results in resentment towards patients.

So what can you do to overcome this pain?

Take care of your body

Whether it's exercising, stretching, or getting massages make sure you give your body time to rest and recover. Respecting your body is the only way to sustain a long career in dentistry.

Fuel your body

Many times we are so busy working, we forget to nourish ourselves during the day. Make sure you make time to eat, especially before going to work. Eating well nourishes your mind and body, which in turn affects your mood. You'll find that you are better focused and do better dentistry.

Fill your other cups

Your career does not define you. Create a work schedule that works for you. That could mean working just a few days a week so you can find time to invest in yourself. Self-care is not just physical care but also making time for relationships and hobbies. Every person has the right to make memories so try new things, make plans, and create experiences.

If you're still reading this then, you've probably recognized signs of burnout in yourself. At least now, you know that you're not the only one. The good thing is, it's never too late to make a change. Start by visualizing the type of dentistry you want to practice but also, the type of person you want to be. In doing so, you'll take intentional steps to prioritize yourself and in turn, make your vision a reality.



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BRIAN COLAO

Denobi Award Winner

In the ever-evolving landscape of dentistry, Brian Colao emerges as a guiding force, grounded in almost 30 years of experience. Serving as the Director of Dykema's Dental Service Organizations Industry Group, Brian's journey is marked by a steadfast commitment to making a meaningful difference in the dental community.

Brian's journey began over 28 years ago as a brand new lawyer, when a group of dentists asked him for legal assistance and since then he has served hundreds of dental organizations in all 50 states, Canada, Europe, Japan, the Middle East and Australia. Brian is one of the foremost experts not only in the United States but globally on DSOs and the great evolution and consolidation of dentistry from single and group practices to Dental Service Organizations. He has formed hundreds of DSOs and represented hundreds of investors that sought to buy, sell, invest, or lend in the dental space. Brian has handled virtually every type of compliance or regulatory issue that affects DSOs or the DSO industry and has become the "go to" person in the DSO industry for all types of legal issues.

Brian founded Dykema's DSO Industry Group which has grown from one attorney to over 100 and has become the industry leader for legal services in the DSO space. Brian has also created the Dykema Definitive Conference for DSOs which started with 41 attendees and has grown into the premier event in the DSO industry with over 2,000 attendees. The matters that Brian has handled over the last 28 years have created the legal standards that govern the DSO industry and also established the best practices for conducting due diligence and for maintaining regulatory compliance in the DSO industry.

Brian has been received numerous honors from the dental industry including DSO Influencer Awards, DSO thought leader awards and other awards for his contributions to the dental industry.

Additionally, Brian is a founding board member of Women in DSO, an organization whose powerful mission is to provide access, opportunities and mentorship to the many talented women of the DSO industry. In 2023 he agreed to be on the board of the newly formed DSO Vendor Insights Network (DVIN). DVIN's goal is to bring together those in the dental community that sell products and services to organizations that fit their needs.

Throughout the years, Brian's unwavering dedication and unparalleled expertise have consistently resulted in positive outcomes for his clients, setting a benchmark for excellence. From resolving legal disputes to shaping industry standards to creating the annual Dykema DSO Conference, his contributions have left an indelible mark on the dental community.

Looking ahead, Brian envisions a future where dentistry thrives on principles of integrity, inclusivity, and innovation. He remains committed to guiding DSOs towards success while championing a culture of ethical practice and collaboration. Through his expertise, advocacy, and unwavering commitment, Brian continues to pave the way for excellence in dentistry, inspiring others to do the same.

For those seeking guidance in navigating the legal complexities of the dental industry, Brian Colao and Dykema's Dental Service Organizations Industry Group offer a reliable source of support. To learn more about Dykema's legal support or about ways to get involved with the annual Dykema DSO Conference, connect with him and his team at dykemadso@dykema.com



AMY WOOD

Denobi Award Winner

I want to protect people—that's been my driving force ever since my own information was compromised in a Data Breach over a decade ago. It was a wake-up call that propelled me into a mission to ensure that nobody else had to endure the same ordeal. This pivotal moment led me down a path of becoming a HIPAA Educator, Risk Assessor, and Data Breach Consultant, dedicating myself to safeguarding sensitive information and educating others on the importance of privacy in healthcare.

I have a background in Healthcare Information Technology, which provided me a solid foundation to delve into the complexities of HIPAA compliance. Over the years, I've honed my skills and expertise, striving to turn mundane compliance courses into engaging and educational conversations. My goal has always been clear: to educate as many people as possible so that data breach investigations become a rarity.

What sets my approach apart is the fusion of entertainment and education. I firmly believe that compliance training doesn't have to be dry and boring. I use real-life examples to make the complexities of HIPAA easier to understand. "Embracing HIPAA is half the battle," I often say, emphasizing the need for an informed and proactive stance on privacy protection.

My commitment to excellence is reflected in my numerous certifications in HIPAA, Cybersecurity, and PCI. Among these, the HCISPP (Healthcare Information Security Privacy Practitioner) stands out, as I am one of only 1,400 people who hold this certification—a testament to my dedication to staying ahead of the curve in an ever-evolving field. While I could have pursued opportunities with the Department of Defense or any hospital in the country, I chose to focus on an underserved market—the dental community. My track record speaks volumes: none of the clients I've consulted for in data breach investigations have faced fines or patient lawsuits.

Looking toward the future, I envision a world where healthcare professionals are well-equipped to safeguard patient information. Through my consultancy, Copper Penny Consulting, I aim to reach even more individuals, empowering them with the knowledge and resources needed to protect sensitive data.

Winning the prestigious Denobi Award was a true honor—a validation of the tireless efforts I've poured into this field. It's incredibly rewarding to be making a tangible difference in the dental community and beyond. I am incredibly humbled and proud to be among the other amazing recipients this year. We are truly changing the world!

For anyone seeking guidance in HIPAA compliance and data security, I invite you to visit my website, www.copperpennyconsulting.com. There, you can learn more about the services I offer and how I can assist you in safeguarding what matters most—people's privacy and security.

In the ever-changing landscape of healthcare privacy, I stand as a beacon of knowledge, passion, and unwavering dedication to protecting what matters most. I am committed to championing privacy in healthcare, one conversation at a time.





NOEL PASCHKE

Denobi Award Winner

Your professional history and background

I was 14 years old when my family dentist, Dr. Frederick Magaziner in Baltimore, asked me to work in his office after school as a sterilization assistant. I fell in love with dentistry and have been passionate about it ever since. I've been a reinvention agent throughout my forty plus years in dentistry.

I've been a private practice RDH in general dentistry and periodontics and the first hospital RDH at the Johns Hopkins Hospital starting in 1977. Back then, we didn't have the words to describe the oral systemic link. The only thing I knew was patients shouldn't die from oral infections and I was going to do something about it. Working in collaboration with medical teams, I developed protocols for bone marrow transplant patients and head and neck radiation therapy patients.

I obtained my graduate degree in Adult & Continuing Education through the tuition assistance program at Hopkins. This opened the academic doors to teach at the University of Maryland, Dental School. I was awarded Teacher of the Year in 1994 and the prestigious Linda DeVore Dental Hygiene Alumna Award in 2012. But I had a bigger education dream to reach more people. I wanted to lead education teams for dental companies. I started the Dentsply Cavitron Clinical Education department in 1994, directed the Philips North America Professional Education team, and followed with the inception of the ACTEON North American Clinical Trainer program with over 123 trainers.

Married to an ultrasonic engineer, I eat, breath, and drink ultrasonics. New product development fascinates me. Richard told me my job was to dream it; his job was to make it. It deeply concerned me that we were using ultrasonic inserts with 1mm and 2mm of wear, thinking it was acceptable to provide care with equipment that was only 75% or 50% efficient respectively.

Together, we developed the patented DuraTip[®], manufactured by Parkell, which provides uncompromised clinical care. DuraTip[®] provides nearly 100% scaling efficiency for the full 3mm life of the insert.

Your motivation for your work

My motivation has always been to make things easier to understand and perform, whether in the clinical setting, in academia, in corporate, or in new product development. I attribute this motivation to being dyslexic, which was diagnosed when I was a junior in dental hygiene school while doing my charting in mirror image. I have a knack for taking complex things and making them simple. It was a compensatory behavior I needed for survival and coined it "surthrival".

What you hope to achieve in the future

I am forever grateful to my mentors including Dana Godbout Laake, RDH, MS, LDN who was my predecessor on the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners. And, Diana Friedman, MA, MBA, is one of my former supervisors at Philips. Now it is my turn. I see my future work as CEO-Chief Encouragement Officer helping talented people to excel in the marketplace in a variety of roles. This CEO role includes new talent interested in dental hygiene school, dental professionals who want to continue with advanced degrees, and individuals interested in corporate roles.

In addition, I will continue with innovative product development. Can you image a handheld, cordless ultrasonic scaler? I can. In fact, it is patent pending!

How people can reach you to learn more about their work
I can be reached at noel.ultrasonicsplus@gmail.com

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COVER FEATURE

KARI CARTER-CHERELUS

In the world of dentistry, where every smile is a testament to care and expertise, burnout can lurk in the shadows, silently eroding the passion that once ignited a career. But for Kari Carter-Cherelus, burnout wasn't the end of the road—it was the catalyst for a transformative journey toward empowerment, advocacy, and resilience.



A Childhood Passion Ignited: From a tender age, Kari's fascination with teeth was palpable. Whether meticulously brushing her teeth or eagerly attending dental appointments, her affinity for dentistry was unmistakable. However, the path to her current role as a dental hygienist and burnout coach was not a straight line. After shelving aspirations of becoming an environmental engineer, Kari's mother steered her towards dental hygiene—a decision that set the stage for her multifaceted career. After graduating from Palm Beach State College in 2005, Kari embarked on a professional journey that would eventually lead her to confront and conquer the scourge of burnout within the dental industry.

Navigating the Storm: The Birth of a Burnout Coach: Kari's journey through the corridors of dentistry was not without its trials. Faced with the harrowing specter of burnout, she found herself grappling with exhaustion, insomnia, and a pervasive sense of disillusionment. Like many in her field, she initially struggled to recognize the symptoms for what they were—signs of burnout silently gnawing away at her well-being. However, through introspection, courage, and a steadfast refusal to surrender to despair, Kari emerged from the crucible of burnout with a newfound purpose: to guide others through the labyrinthine maze of burnout and towards the beacon of empowerment.

The Beacon of Hope: A Guide Through the Darkness: Drawing from her own experiences, Kari authored "The Ultimate Guide For Dental Hygienist Burnout," a beacon of hope amidst the darkness of professional disillusionment. Rooted in empathy and seasoned with practical wisdom, her book serves as a roadmap for both novices and seasoned veterans navigating the treacherous waters of burnout. From forging alliances with supportive workplaces to cultivating self-care rituals and setting boundaries, Kari's guide offers a lifeline to those adrift in the turbulent sea of burnout.

Empowerment Through Empathy: As a burnout coach, Kari's mission transcends mere guidance—it embodies a profound commitment to empowerment through empathy. By helping clients harness their latent potential and confront the demons of self-doubt and imposter syndrome, she illuminates the path toward self-actualization and professional fulfillment. Through her coaching sessions, Kari instills in her clients the belief that the power to effect change lies within them, waiting to be unleashed through courage and perseverance.

Cultivating a Culture of Care: At the heart of Kari's mission lies a fervent belief in the transformative power of a supportive workplace culture. By advocating for respectful discourse, fostering open communication, and championing the value of every team member's voice, she endeavors to create environments where burnout is not merely addressed but prevented. In her vision, every workplace becomes a sanctuary of appreciation, where the contributions of each individual are celebrated and nurtured.

Looking Towards the Horizon: As Kari's influence continues to ripple across industries and professions, her gaze remains fixed on the horizon of possibility. With aspirations to speak at more conferences, conduct workshops, and amplify her impact on a global scale, she remains steadfast in her commitment to healing and empowerment. For Kari, each testimonial of positive change is not just a validation of her efforts—it's a testament to the enduring power of resilience and the human capacity for transformation.



COVER FEATURE

A Call to Action: To those grappling with burnout's suffocating embrace, Kari extends a lifeline of hope and guidance. Through her book, coaching services, and advocacy, she stands as a beacon of resilience in a world often shrouded in darkness. And to organizations and leaders seeking to foster cultures of care and empowerment, she offers a simple yet profound message: change begins from within, and together, we can sculpt a future where burnout is a distant memory.

Embracing the Journey: As Kari Carter-Cherelus continues to traverse the winding paths of dentistry and burnout advocacy, her story serves as a reminder that even in the darkest of times, hope remains a steadfast companion. With courage as her compass and empathy as her guiding star, she leads the way towards a future where burnout is not an inevitability, but a challenge to be met with resilience, compassion, and unwavering determination.





APRIL '24

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