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# **NAVIGATING THE SHADOWS: UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING ACADEMIC BURNOUT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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The World Health Organisation (2019) recently acknowledged 'burnout' as an 'occupational phenomenon' and was consequently included in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Burnout was declared a 'syndrome due to chronic workplace stress being unsuccessfully managed' (World Health Organisation, 2019).

Moreover, burnout has several negative impacts, such as adverse health problems like musculoskeletal disorders, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and reduced service quality (Darban, Bolouchi, & Narouipour, 2016; Hall, Johnson, & Watt, 2016). In addition, the main concerns are that burnout can also lead to significant economic consequences through increased absenteeism, turnover rates, and healthcare costs (Galletta et al., 2016).

With its promise of academic and personal growth, university life often marks a transformative period in a young person's life. However, this journey can also come with challenges, and academic burnout is one of the most concerning. In this article, we explore the concept of academic burnout among university students, its causes, signs, and, most importantly, strategies to combat it.

Academic burnout is more than just a case of students feeling momentarily stressed or overwhelmed by their coursework. It is a pervasive and chronic state of exhaustion and cynicism resulting from prolonged exposure to high-stress levels and unrealistic expectations. This phenomenon can devastate a student's mental and physical health, academic performance, and overall quality of life.

There are several causes of academic burnout. Several factors contribute to academic burnout, such as high academic expectations among lecturers and parents. Intense pressure to excel academically, maintain high grades, and secure a promising future career can lead to overwhelming stress. Secondly, a heavy workload, such as the sheer volume of coursework, assignments, and exams, can be daunting, especially when combined with extracurricular activities and part-time jobs. Third is perfectionism among students and academicians. Striving for perfection in every aspect of academic life can be detrimental. Students who constantly need to be flawless may experience heightened stress levels.

Another issue was a lack of time management skills. Poor time management can lead to procrastination, contributing to increased

of stress to a student's life.

Academic burnout manifests in various ways, including physical symptoms such as persistent fatigue, sleep disturbances, headaches, and stomach problems. Emotional Exhaustion such as feelings of hopelessness, irritability, and a sense of being overwhelmed, and lastly, cynicism which can lead to the development of a negative attitude towards coursework, professors, and even the entire educational system.

Preventing and managing academic burnout requires a multi-faceted approach such as seeking support from different angles. Do not hesitate to contact professors, academic advisors, or campus counseling services for advice and support. Universities often have resources to help students cope with stress and academic challenges. Students also need to have time management skills to arrange their time properly. Develop practical time management skills such as creating schedules and setting realistic goals to avoid last-minute cramming. Self-care is also important to students to help them improve their mental and physical health. It is recommended to prioritize self-care activities, including exercise, healthy eating, and adequate sleep. These practices can help to reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

In conclusion, academic burnout among university students is a pressing issue that needs attention and action. Universities and institutions should prioritize mental health support and encourage open conversations about stress and burnout. Students, in turn, should be proactive in seeking help, managing their time wisely, and prioritizing self-care. By recognizing the signs and addressing the root causes of academic burnout, students can ensure that their university experience is one of growth, resilience, and achievement. Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness, and it is a crucial step towards overcoming academic burnout.

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