



# Burnout & High Achievers

A Short, Supportive Guide to Understanding  
Exhaustion and Taking Steps to Recover

**Kim Jones, M.A., MFT**

# Burnout & High Achievers

***Why you're exhausted—even though you're  
“doing everything right”***

If you're capable, responsible and used to pushing through, burnout can be especially confusing. You may look fine on the outside—while feeling depleted, irritable or disconnected on the inside.

This isn't a personal failure. It's a nervous system that's been under sustained pressure for too long.

## **Signs of Burnout That Often Go Unnoticed**

Burnout doesn't always look like collapse. Often, it looks like:

- Feeling tired even after resting
- Small tasks taking more effort than they should
- Staying productive but feeling joyless or numb
- Increased irritability or cynicism
- Feeling guilty when you slow down
- Repeatedly thinking, “*I should be able to handle this*”

Burnout often shows up as a **loss of capacity**, not a lack of motivation.

## Why High Achievers Are Especially Vulnerable

Many high achievers are skilled at pushing through discomfort—and are rewarded for it.

You may:

- Take pride in being reliable and capable
- Minimize your own needs to meet expectations
- Tie self-worth to performance or productivity
- Rest only after everything is finished (which is rarely)

What helped you succeed may now be what's exhausting you.

## Burnout Is a Nervous System Issue (Not a Mindset Problem)

Burnout isn't something you can think your way out of.

It happens when the nervous system remains in a prolonged state of stress without enough recovery.

Motivation, focus and creativity don't return through more pressure.

They return through **safety, regulation and support**.

## Three Small Things That Can Help Right Now

These aren't fixes—they're ways to reduce strain and signal safety to your system.

### 1. Reduce, don't eliminate

Ask yourself: *What is one thing I can make **10% easier** today?*

### 2. Shift from pushing to pacing

Work in shorter bursts. Pause before you're depleted, not after.

### 3. Regulate once a day, Choose one:

- Step outside for five minutes
- Slow your exhale so it's longer than your inhale
- Ground through your senses (name five things you can see, four things you can hear...)

Small changes matter when your system is overloaded.

## When Burnout Doesn't Resolve on Its Own

If rest doesn't help the way it used to, burnout may be layered with anxiety, trauma or long-standing pressure to perform.

Therapy can help you **recover capacity**, not just cope better.

## Next Step

If any of this resonated, you are not alone. Please contact me to discuss how working together can support you. Office: 858-204-2599 or email: [Kim@Kimjonescounseling.com](mailto:Kim@Kimjonescounseling.com).