



How to Handle Burnout

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How to Handle Burnout

Written by Tina B. Tessina, LMFT, Ph.D.

Burnout: It's necessary to take extremely good care of yourself as the therapist.

1. Make sure you are effective with clients. Clients who get better are very motivating. It's more important to help clients heal old trauma than to adhere to a theoretical base.

2. Work from your heart – trust yourself and your intuition. If you guess wrong, just accept it and go on. In the end, you have to do therapy your own way. Theories and studies are helpful, but not if they hamper your own style.

3. Identify your preferences, do your best to maximize what you like and minimize what you don't like. If you don't like paperwork, get computer programs or secretarial help. If you don't like working with depression, either don't see those clients, or get more training so you'll know how to handle it. If you like working with women, children, couples, etc. focus on that in your practice building.

4. Have a support team of colleagues with whom you can share your therapy experiences as peers.

5. Learn to set solid boundaries. Learn how to say no to intrusive clients, how to keep them in appropriate parts of your life, and not let them take over your free time.

6. Limit your hours to what works for you. Design your own style of working, and make sure your place of work is comfortable to you.

7. Trust that you will get the right clients for your style. Be clear what your own style is, and don't worry if it doesn't work for some clients – refer them to someone else. Different clients need different therapy styles.

8. Learn from therapists you respect and admire, with whom you feel comfortable. If you don't respect a theory or practice style, don't use it. If you can modify a theory or practice style to suit you, do it.

9. Do your own work. It's impossible to be effective as a therapist if you haven't been in the client's chair. You need to delve deeply into your own subconscious, so that you'll understand your weaknesses and your strengths, and won't be blindsided by "dark side" issues when they are triggered.

Author Bio:

Tina B. Tessina, Ph.D. <http://www.tinatessina.com> is a licensed psychotherapist in S. California, with over 30 years experience in counseling individuals and couples and author of 13 books in 17 languages, including *It Ends With You: Grow Up and Out of Dysfunction* (New Page); *How to Be a Couple and Still Be Free* (New Page); *The Unofficial Guide to Dating Again* (Wiley) and *The Real 13th Step: Discovering Self-Confidence, Self-Reliance and Independence Beyond the Twelve Step Programs* (New Page.) Her newest books are *Money, Sex and Kids: Stop Fighting About the Three Things That Can Ruin Your Marriage* and *The Commuter Marriage*. She publishes "Happiness Tips from Tina", an e-mail newsletter, and the "Dr. Romance Blog" http://drromance.typepad.com/dr_romance_blog/ and has hosted "The Psyche Deli: delectable tidbits for the subconscious" a weekly hour long radio show. Online, she is "Dr. Romance" with columns at ThirdAge.com, Divorce360.com, Healthapalooza.com, and Yahoo!Personals, as well as a [Redbook](http://Redbook.com) Love Network expert. Dr. Tessina guests frequently on radio, and such TV shows as "Oprah", "Larry King Live" and ABC news. Follow her on www.twitter.com/tinatessina or www.facebook.com/tinatessina

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