

What's the difference between depression and burnout?



The difference between [depression](#) and burnout is not always easy to see. There are even certain diagnosis tools which do not differentiate between them and therefore not see burnout as a separate disorder. If we were to compare burnout to other mental disorders, it is most similar to depression. Therefore, the difference between depression and burnout is not always evident.

What do the psychiatrists say?

Even though diagnosis tools do not consider burnout to be a separate disease, **psychiatrists do state that burnout is a separate disease**. Burnout is generally defined as an extreme exhaustion after the body and mind have been exhausted and pushed too far, according to them.

Is it therefore easy to differentiate between depression and burnout? Definitely not. Depression and burnout namely are very similar to each other and are often seen together, too.

Difference between depression and burnout: the symptoms

Depression and burnout are very similar to each other. Here, there are symptoms which match the both of them. The following examples are among them:

- Concentration issues
- Memory issues
- Sleeping issues
- Exhausted feeling

The symptoms above apply to both depression and burnout. If psychiatrists then want to set a diagnosis, they will often notice that the same tests can be used for both the diagnosis. The results, which are then found in the tests, can thus point at both depression and burnout.

So you see that it is really difficult to define the difference between depression and burnout. In the following paragraph we will give clear differences, so that you get a clearer picture of the symptoms.

The clear difference between depression and burnout

The first difference between depression and burnout is that **depression is more general**. Depression will namely affect several parts in life and can also develop from different parts in life, such as:

- Your family
- Your friends
- Your hobbies

Burnout is generally **work related**. Of course the stress which you experience at work can affect your relationship, but in

depression this is often more clearly seen. Furthermore, a burnout tends to develop from a work situation, while depression can develop in a more general way. A burnout can eventually also influence other parts of life, like a depression, but this is more likely to occur in a later stage. (Iacovides, Fountoulakis, Kaprinis & Kaprinis, 2003). Depression on the other hand, can have a quick and large influence on several parts of life, while burnout will limit itself to work for a longer period of time.

Difference between depression and burnout: occurring together?

Depression and burnout can also occur together. It is not unlikely that a severe burnout can also cause depression symptoms.