

# How to Handle Burnout in CS

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## Episode 20 Companion Download

Burnout in Customer Success isn't a personal failing - it's a systemic issue that requires systemic solutions. This workbook gives you practical frameworks to recognize burnout early, address it when it shows up, and build sustainable practices for long-term CS performance.

### The Three Dimensions of Burnout

Rate yourself honestly on each (1 = not experiencing, 5 = experiencing intensely):

1. **Emotional Exhaustion**

Coming home from customer calls with nothing left. Avoiding scheduling interactions because being present feels impossible. Going through emails on autopilot instead of processing what customers need.

Your score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Depersonalization**

Treating customer interactions as tasks to complete instead of relationships to nurture. Work becomes mechanical. Executing processes without genuine engagement. Customers become company names instead of people.

Your score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Reduced Sense of Accomplishment**

Even when hitting metrics, it doesn't feel meaningful. Closing a renewal and thinking "so what, I'll just have to do this again next quarter." Wins that used to energize you now feel hollow.

Your score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

**If you scored 3+ on all three dimensions, you're experiencing burnout and need to implement recovery strategies.**

### Six Recovery Strategies

1. **Audit Your Emotional Labor**

For one week, track every interaction where you consciously managed your emotional response. Most CSMs underestimate this by a factor of three.

This week's count:

- Monday: \_\_\_\_\_ interactions
- Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_ interactions
- Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_ interactions
- Thursday: \_\_\_\_\_ interactions
- Friday: \_\_\_\_\_ interactions

**Total for the week: \_\_\_\_\_**

2. **Build Recovery Rituals**

Small, consistent practices between high-intensity interactions. You're creating circuit breakers so stress doesn't compound.

My recovery ritual:

Physical movement (stand up, walk to get water, step outside for 2 minutes):

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Breathing/grounding (box breathing: 4 counts in, hold 4, 4 counts out, hold 4):

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Context-switch task (20 min of mechanical work e.g., data entry or documentation):

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3. **Redefine Success Metrics**

Measure what you actually control instead of outcomes influenced by external factors.

This Week's Wins Journal:

Small win #1 (e.g., de-escalated a tense situation, documented a risk, maintained composure):

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Small win #2:

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Small win #3:

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4. **Establish Hard Boundaries**

Constant availability isn't sustainable. Define clear working hours and protect them.

My boundaries:

Working hours: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Email cutoff time: \_\_\_\_\_

Weekend availability: Only for genuine emergencies

How I'll communicate these to customers: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Build Peer Support Networks**

CS work is isolating. You need colleagues who understand the specific challenges.

My peer support plan:

CSM colleague(s) I'll connect with: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency (e.g., weekly coffee, bi-weekly check-in): \_\_\_\_\_

First meeting scheduled for: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Advocate for Systemic Changes**

Individual strategies help, but don't address root causes. Come to your manager with data and specific proposals.

Data I'll bring:

My portfolio size: \_\_\_\_\_ accounts

Industry benchmark for similar role: \_\_\_\_\_ accounts

Time required for core responsibilities per account per week: \_\_\_\_\_ hours

My proposal:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Prevention Practices**

Build these practices before burnout shows up:

- Systematize routine work (templates, checklists, frameworks)
- Protect time for deep work on your calendar
- Celebrate invisible wins that don't show up on dashboards
- Maintain role boundaries (you're not Support/Sales/Product)
- Invest in your own development

**Your 30-Day Action Plan**

Commit to implementing one strategy per week:

- Week 1: Audit emotional labor and identify patterns
- Week 2: Build recovery rituals and protect buffer time
- Week 3: Start wins journal and redefine success metrics
- Week 4: Establish boundaries and connect with peer support

*Sustainable practices don't make you less capable. They make you MORE capable because you can maintain excellence over time instead of oscillating between heroic performance and exhausted mediocrity.*

## Next Steps and Resources

This guide is part of The CSM Career Ladder mini-series on ClearPath Conversations:

- **Episode 18:** The CSM to Team Lead Transition
- **Episode 19:** Internal Advocacy: How to Get Credit Without Bragging
- **Episode 20:** How to Handle Burnout in CS

Upcoming Episodes - The Advanced Relationship Management miniseries:

- **Episode 21:** Stakeholder Mapping 201: What to Do When Everyone Changes
- **Episode 22:** How to Manage a CSM Portfolio During a Crisis
- **Episode 23:** The Art of Saying “No” as a CSM

Additional Resources:

- *ClearPath CX Website:* Templates, frameworks, and resources at [ClearPathCX.com](http://ClearPathCX.com)
- *LinkedIn:* Connect with Mark at [linkedin.com/in/markbernardin](https://www.linkedin.com/in/markbernardin)