

Video Chat Burnout is Real - Take Care of Yourself



The pandemic is changing the way we meet with colleagues, clients and have meetings. Often we are turning to video applications to connect. While this technology has had amazing impacts on our ability to see each other in the midst of isolation, it's important to put this tool in context.

Transition:

With the way we interact with others at work evolving, we are engaging with our work in innovative ways. It's fantastic that technology has meant we can continue to be productive and meet the needs of our organizations and the people we serve during the most significant and abrupt work transition of our generation. As we were all confronted with this, we have adapted this technology into our work processes. We have an opportunity to assess and evaluate how this technology is enhancing and improving our work experiences, as well as how technology is isn't ideal.

Context:

Video chats give us the ability to see and hear from our colleagues and people we serve, from far away while maintaining physical distance. But they are not an exact substitute for in person connection. When meeting in person, we aren't confronted with an image of ourselves and our physical cues staring back at us. Video chats connect us with a talking head, rather than a fully present person that is sharing the same environment. It's harder to pick up social cues over video than in person and our brain needs to work harder to process the information being presented to us. Most of us are learning and adapting to new technology that we haven't used or mastered before. That's a steep learning curve for a brain that's already processing a host of other new pandemic related demands.

Options:

It's important to have healthy boundaries around video meet ups.

- Can you choose audio or phone calls, even some of the time? Some experts even suggest a walk and talk, get up and get moving while talking.
- I've heard people having 3+ hours long video chats. That's too long for an in person meeting, and not productive for a video chat. Is it possible to set time limits to meetings? Have an agenda and pick your top three priorities to cover.
- Do as much as you can outside the video chat. Use shared documents and emails to get as much of the work done to keep video chat check ins as efficient and short as possible.
- Ask the client or person engaging in your service what they prefer, some might choose video, and some might prefer audio. Most of all, they will appreciate their needs being considered.
- Set up a buffer between video chats so you mentally have time to recover. Actively put taking a break (movement, quick meditation, breathing exercises) into your schedule between video chats to give your brain a processing break.
- Limit your video chats outside of work. If your workday is full of video calls, find alternate ways to connect socially. Turn down video requests in favour of self care. The quality of social interaction is more valuable than the quantity.

Most of all, take active care of you. Notice when you are feeling the impact of this technology and take steps to reduce the burden.

For Further Information:

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200421-why-zoom-video-chats-are-so-exhausting>

Contact Information:

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