

*This message has been authorized by Tanya Rowell, CEO
Public Service Commission*



Video Chat Burnout is Real - Take Care of Yourself

The pandemic has changed the way we interact with colleagues, clients and others. Often we are turning to video applications to connect. While this technology has had positive impacts on our ability to see each other, it's important to put it in context.

Transition:

With the way we interact with others at work evolving, we engage 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 this work transition. We have adapted this technology into our work processes and have an opportunity to assess and evaluate how it is enhancing and improving our work experiences and how technology is and isn't ideal.

Context:

Video chats give us the ability to interact with our colleagues and clients, however, it is important to remember that technology is not an exact substitute for an 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 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. Many of us are learning and adapting to new technology that we may not have used or mastered before. It can be a steep learning curve for a brain that may be already processing a host of other new pandemic related demands.

Options:

It's important to have healthy boundaries around video meetings.

- 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.
- At times people are having 3+ hour-long video chats. That is too long for an in-person meeting and may not be productive for a video chat. Is it possible to set time limits to meetings? Have a plan and pick your top three priorities to cover, where possible.
- 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 a video option and some might prefer audio. Most of all, they will appreciate their needs are being considered.

- Set up a buffer between video chats, so you mentally have time to recover. Actively take a break (movement, quick meditation, breathing exercises) in 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 favor of self-care. The quality of social interaction is more valuable than quantity.

Most of all, take active care of yourself. Notice when you are feeling any impacts of over utilizing video chats and take steps to resolve those impacts.

For Further Information:

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

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