

Burnout Reality Check for ADHD Dentists

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You're not broken. You're burned out. And there's a difference.

Quick Reality Check

If you downloaded this guide, something isn't working. You might call it "stress" or "just being dramatic," but here's the truth: You're showing up for everyone else while slowly disappearing inside.

This guide won't tell you to "practice self-care." It will tell you what's actually happening and why traditional advice hasn't worked.

Truth #1: Your "High Standards" Are Actually Fear

What you tell yourself: "I just have high standards."

What's really happening: You're terrified of being judged, so you over-do everything.

Signs this is you:

- Redoing work that's already good
- Staying late for things that could wait
- Feeling sick when you make small mistakes

- Never feeling "ready" for the next step

Ask yourself: "If I wasn't afraid of being judged, what would I do differently?"

Truth #2: You're Not Managing Stress—You're Managing Trauma

What you tell yourself: "This is normal work stress."

What's really happening: Daily exposure to others' pain + financial pressure + life-or-death decisions = trauma, not stress.

Trauma looks like:

- Always scanning for the next crisis
- Can't access joy like you used to
- Physical symptoms (headaches, GI issues, sleep problems)
- Feeling disconnected from your own needs

Ask yourself: "When was the last time I felt genuinely calm?" If you can't remember, you're in survival mode.

Truth #3: Your Practice Became Your Identity

What you tell yourself: "My practice is my life's work."

What's really happening: You can't tell where you end and the business begins.

Signs you've lost yourself:

- Your mood depends on how the practice is doing
- You feel guilty when not thinking about work
- You can't imagine who you'd be without your practice

- Relationships suffer because work always comes first

Try this: Write 5 things about who you are that have nothing to do with being a dentist. Struggling? That's your answer.

Truth #4: You're Addicted to Being Needed

What you tell yourself: "I love helping people."

What's really happening: You can't say no or set boundaries because your self-worth depends on being indispensable.

Signs of need-addiction:

- Anxiety when others handle things without you
- Creating emergencies by not delegating
- Guilt when not actively helping someone
- Neglecting your needs for everyone else's

Ask yourself: "When did I last say no to a request?" If you can't remember or it felt terrible, you're operating from need, not service.

Truth #5: The System Is Broken, Not You

What you tell yourself: "If I was stronger, I could handle this."

What's really happening: You're trying to succeed in a system designed for profit, not provider wellbeing. Your burnout is a rational response to an irrational situation.

Reality check: If your best friend described your exact work situation, would you tell them to "just work harder" or would you recognize the situation is unsustainable?

The 10-Minute Truth Session

Warning: This might be uncomfortable. Do it anyway.

10 minutes total

1. What are you most afraid would happen if you stopped trying so hard?

Write for 2 minutes. Don't think, just write.

2. Complete this sentence: "I'm secretly afraid that..."

Write for 2 minutes. Include the thoughts you've never said out loud.

3. What has burnout actually cost you?

Write for 3 minutes. Be specific about relationships, experiences, parts of yourself you've lost.

4. When did you last feel genuinely alive and engaged?

Write for 3 minutes. If you can't remember, write about what that means.

After writing: Look at what you wrote. This isn't just venting—this is data about your emotional reality. Notice what themes keep coming up. This is where recovery begins.

The Bottom Line

Recovery isn't about "work-life balance." It's about remembering who you are underneath all the roles and expectations.

You are not broken. You got caught in unsustainable patterns. And patterns can be changed.

Your Next Steps

- 1. Today:** Tell one person you trust that you're struggling. Cancel one non-essential thing this week.
 - 2. This week:** Practice saying "no" to one small request. Notice your patterns without trying to fix them yet.
 - 3. This month:** Consider working with someone who understands professional burnout. Start imagining what your life could look like if you weren't afraid.
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Ready for More Support?

Follow me for daily insights on burnout recovery and creating sustainable success as an ADHD dentist.

Book a clarity call if you're ready to discuss what recovery might look like for your specific situation.

Join my coaching program for dentists who are tired of surviving and ready to thrive.

Whatever you choose, remember: You matter. Your wellbeing matters. And you deserve a life that feels as good on the inside as it looks on the outside.

TIFF THE ADHD DENTIST

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*This guide is dedicated to every dentist who has felt alone in their struggle.
You are seen, you are valuable, and recovery is possible.*

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