

Homeschool Leader: Are You Burnt Out?

Carol Topp, CPA



Symptoms of Burn Out

Loss of interest, vision or enthusiasm	Feelings of failure
Neglect of your own children/their homeschool time	Depression
Increased complaints from your husband or children	Constant negative feelings
Health problems (insomnia, headaches, colds, fatigue)	Moodiness/irritability
Increased worry	Declining performance
Frustration	

Ten Ways to Avoid Burn Out

1. Have clear and realistic expectations. Approach the idea of leading a homeschool organization with your eyes wide open. Write down what you expect from your group experience.
2. Plan ahead. Decide what you will do, whom you will serve, as well as when and where you will meet.
3. Get help. **You cannot do this alone.** Even Moses could not handle the burden of leadership alone. God directed Moses to: "*Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people... They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.*" (Numbers 11:16). Establish a board of directors. Choose people of integrity with gifts of organization and discernment.
4. Focus on your purpose. Have a mission statement. **You cannot be all things for all people.**
5. Make policies. Written procedures will help the group rely on a plan instead of quick decisions made while in a crisis. Bylaws outline membership, voting, meetings and officer positions.
6. Create a budget to help you plan your events, relieve stress and worry, and stay focused on your mission. Have a plan of where the money will come from and where it will go. Be sure to include a buffer for the unexpected.
7. Be prepared for conflict. You will have disagreements in any group of people. If you manage disagreements in a biblical way, conflict can strengthen your group.
8. Learn to manage volunteers. Trust them and delegate tasks to them that fit their skills. Do not try to do everything yourself. Ask specific individuals for help, complimenting their skills.
9. Rotate leadership responsibilities. Follow the example of geese who can fly 80% further because they rotate the lead bird.
10. Pray and ask God for help.

Resources

- *Homeschool Co-ops: How to Start Them, Run Them and Not Burn Out* by Carol Topp
- *Money Management for Homeschool Organizations* by Carol Topp
- *Questions and Answers for Homeschool Leaders* by Carol Topp
- *One by One: The Homeschool Group Leaders Guide to Motivating Every Member* by Kristen Fragala and Denise Hyde available at [HomeschoolCPA.com/Leader Tools/Links](http://HomeschoolCPA.com/LeaderTools/Links)
- TOSHSN Leaders Yahoo group at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TOSHSN Leadership Group/join](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TOSHSN_Leadership_Group/join)
- Facebook page: I am a Homeschool Group Leader
- *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande available from Peacemaker.net.

