



# Juniper

COUNSELLING



*Between the Stacks:  
Finding Your Way Back from Burnout*

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# Introduction

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Taking care of your mental well-being is not a luxury in library work—it's a necessity. You are often the quiet anchors of our community: supporting patrons through stress, navigating increasing demands, managing limited resources, and showing up with patience and professionalism day after day. Over time, that constant giving can lead to exhaustion, emotional fatigue, and burnout.

This workbook was created with you in mind. Inside, you'll find simple, practical tools to help you reconnect with yourself, reduce overwhelm, and build small, sustainable habits that support your mental and emotional well-being. As you move through these pages, we invite you to approach yourself with the same kindness, patience, and care that you so often offer others.

*“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation.*

*— Glenn Close*

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## 1. Daily Check-in

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Assess your mood each day—notice what's depleted before planting another round of demands.

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When you plant the same demand in the same soil, season after season, the ground gives out. This is what burnout looks like.

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Depleted soil needs a variety of nutrients to recover. Your energy needs a rotation of restorative practices to grow again.

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Tools, communities, and resources to help you keep rotating your crops and restoring your soil long-term.

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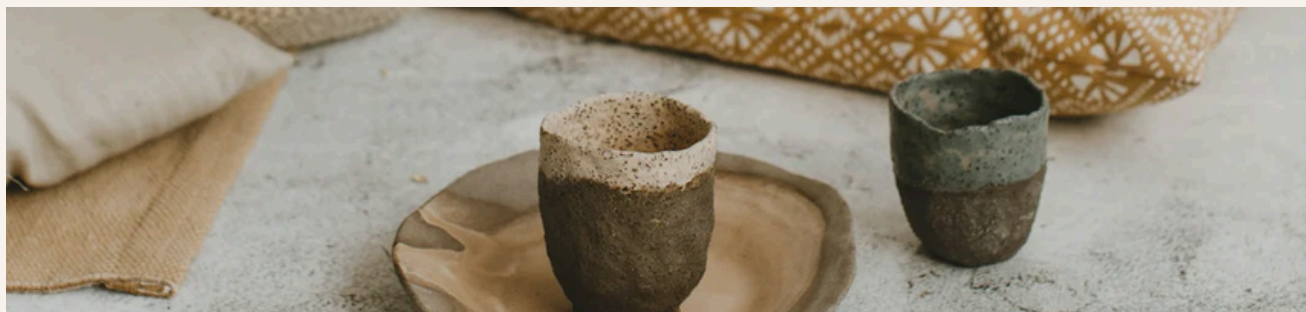
Healthy soil isn't built in a day. Small, consistent acts of restoration add up season after season.



# 01 Daily Mood Check-in



Daily mood check-ins—brief moments to assess your mental state—play a key role in preventing burnout. When we pause to notice our mood we can catch exhaustion before the ground cracks. Think of it like a farmer walking the field each morning: checking moisture, noticing what’s wilting, and deciding what needs rest. By tuning into your mood day by day, you become empowered to rotate your crops before the harvest fails.

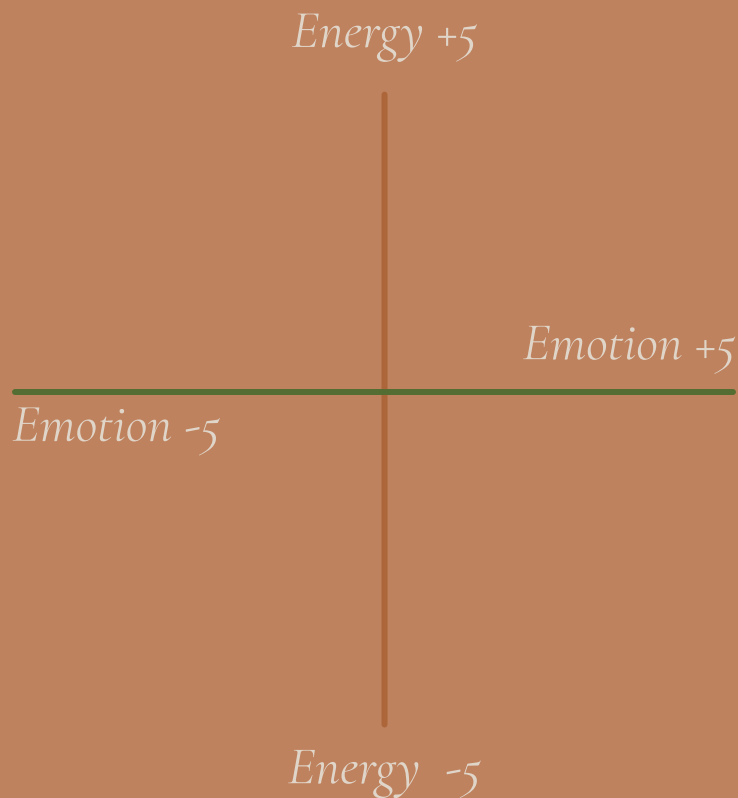


## Set Yourself Up for a Daily Soil Check

Begin by choosing a consistent moment—morning, midday, or evening—and create a simple ritual (like a quiet corner with a cup of tea). Take 2–5 minutes to check your soil: What’s been over-planted? What nutrients are running low? Remember—don’t let perfection get in the way of progress. Aim for 80% consistency. And choose a check-in that actually works for your life, not one you think “should” work.



Ideas to try if you don't know where to start...



**1** Today I feel? Perhaps it's anxious, sad, tired, irritable, hopeful... get kind and curious with what ever comes up

**2** What's taking up space in my mind today? Write down all that shows up for you

**3** What is one thing I can do to take care of myself today?



# 02

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## What is Burnout?



*Burnout is like mono-cropping your energy —planting the same demand in the same soil, season after season, until there's nothing left to give.*

When you pour all your energy into one area—work, caregiving, output—without rotating in rest, play, or nourishment, the soil of your nervous system gets depleted. Just like farmland that's been mono-cropped, it loses its nutrients, its richness, its ability to grow anything at all.

The fix isn't just to weeding. It's to actively replenish—to rotate what you ask of yourself, to let some fields lie fallow, and to add back the nutrients: sleep, connection, movement, joy, stillness. Recovery isn't passive. It's intentional restoration, one season at a time.



# 03

## Nutrient Action Plan

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*Depleted soil doesn't need more weeding—it needs different nutrients. When you've been mono-cropping your energy, recovery means rotating in a variety of nourishment. On the next page, you'll find a menu of restorative practices—think of them as the compost, cover crops, and rain your soil has been missing. Pick what feeds you today, and rotate as the seasons of your life shift.*







### Physical Movement Nutrient

Helps your soil recover through body-based restoration.

- Walk barefoot on grass
- Stretch or do gentle yoga
- Dance to a favourite song
- Swim in open water
- Ride a bike somewhere new
- Garden or dig in actual soil



### Quality Social Connection Nutrient

The compost that enriches your soil through belonging.

- Call a friend with no agenda
- Cook a meal with someone
- Join a community group or class
- Give a compliment to a stranger
- Ask for help out loud
- Share a genuine laugh
- Write a letter to someone you miss



### Mental Stimulation Nutrient

The cover crop that keeps your mind fertile and curious.

- Learn one new thing today
- Listen to a podcast on a new topic
- Do a puzzle or brain game
- Read something outside your field
- Write freely for 10 minutes
- Have a curious conversation



*"Don't just stop planting. Start composting."*

# Nutrient Action Plan

## Nature Nutrient

Time in nature replenishes your soil like rain after a dry spell.

2-3 ways to increase your time in nature:

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## Quality Social Connection Nutrient

The compost that enriches your soil through belonging.

Do you get enough time on your own? Yes / No

2-3 people you want to spend more time with (one could be YOU)

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## Activities to Replenish Your Soil

List 4-5 activities you can add to your routine. Include one that you can do today!

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# Additional Resources



## Recreation

Coquitlam Parks and Recreation has everything you need to nourish yourself—movement, connection and nature

## Nature Trails

Find trails and moments in Nature near you!

## Boost by Jamie Gruman

Great book on the science of recharging yourself in an age of unrelenting demands

## Emotional Labour

Research on the emotional labour of public library workers



# Conclusion and Next Steps

Thank you for completing this Burnout Recovery Mini-Workbook. You've taken a meaningful step toward tending your soil—understanding what depletes you and what replenishes you. Remember: diverse nutrients, planted consistently, are what keep your soil rich and resilient. One small seed today grows into something stronger tomorrow.



If you're ready to dig deeper and tend your soil with support, we're here. At Juniper Counselling, we help you identify what's been over-cropped, replenish what's been depleted, and cultivate a life rooted in **connection, community, and courage**—so your whole self can grow.

[BOOK NOW](#)

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*Want more mental-health tips and resources?*

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