

# Caregiver Burnout Workbook

Learn more about caregiver burnout, how it affects you, and effective strategies for managing it with six exercises.

- **Identifying Caregiver Burnout**
- **Help With Caregiving Tasks**
- **Caregiving Solutions**
- **Personal Solutions**

# Caregiver Burnout Workbook

Caregiver burnout can arise from a complex mix of personal stressors and the demands of caring for your children, spouse, parents, or other loved one. **This workbook is designed to help you get to know your caregiver burnout and learn about effective solutions that are a good fit for you.** With a combination of caregiving solutions like finding support and personal solutions like challenging difficult mental patterns around caregiving and rest, you can push towards alleviating your stress.

Here is a brief introduction to each worksheet included in this package:

## Identifying Caregiver Burnout

This worksheet introduces common symptoms of caregiver burnout, and helps you **learn which of the worksheets below are the best fit for you based on your answers.**

caregiving  
solutions

### Help With Caregiving Tasks

Review your caregiving tasks, break them down, and overcome barriers to asking for help with this worksheet.

### Get the Caregiving Support You Need

There may be more resources available for caregivers than you know. This worksheet will help you name and find support for a variety of burnout-related concerns.

personal  
solutions

### Daily Rest Ritual for Caregivers

This worksheet will help you effectively rest with a clear daily ritual.

### Feeling Guilty About Rest or Time Off from Caregiving

Challenge common messages about rest and time off with this worksheet, and create more true, realistic messages about the importance of rest.

### Mental Patterns That Affect Caregiver Burnout

This worksheet helps you explore mental patterns that affect caregiver burnout, like perfectionism and people-pleasing, and suggests ways to break those patterns.

*\*This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



# Identifying Caregiver Burnout

Caregiver burnout happens when there is a mismatch between a person's capacities and the demands of their caregiving responsibilities. People might experience caregiver burnout because they are going through stress, health, or financial challenges, which could deplete their energy and make caregiving harder. Caregiver burnout can occur if caregivers are having trouble managing all their tasks with limited support, or if their caregivees are facing difficult developmental phases, complex medical or psychological conditions, or are nearing the end of life.

If you're wondering if you are experiencing caregiver burnout, we encourage you to try our [free caregiver burnout quiz](#), which can help you understand how intense your symptoms are and direct you to resources based on your answers.

You can also see some common symptoms of caregiver burnout below:

Feeling less competent at caregiving, like you're not doing as well as before	Procrastinating, avoiding tasks, or avoiding caregiving more
Feeling emotionally drained	Feeling physically exhausted
Feeling more anxious, irritable, or overwhelmed than usual	Having more difficulty concentrating and/or making more mistakes than usual
Feeling indifferent, like you just don't care as much as you used to about caregiving	Feeling cynical or pessimistic about your caregiving situation

**What does caregiver burnout feel like for you?**

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# Identifying Caregiver Burnout

Are there any personal factors (like stress, health, finances) contributing to burnout for you?

Are there *caregiving-focused* solutions that might help? These might look like:

- Organizing and breaking down caregiving tasks
- Coordinating help with simple caregiving tasks
- Finding care for children, adults with disabilities, or elderly family members
- Financial assistance with caregiving
- Connecting to resources for caregivees with a particular physical or psychological condition
- Getting caregiving questions answered by experts
- Learning about respite care options (temporary, professional caregiving so you can attend to your own needs)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

To explore some of these ideas, check out the **caregiving** worksheets below.

solutions

Are there any *personal* solutions that might help? These might look like:

- Focusing on rest with a daily ritual
- Using time off to take a break and recover
- Challenging mental patterns that maintain burnout or keep you from taking breaks
- Connecting with support outside of caregiving (e.g., loved ones, other communities)
- Good self-care, social, spiritual, and physical habits to keep yourself healthy
- Living a rich, meaningful life outside of caregiving by doing what matters to you
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

To explore some of these ideas, check out the **personal** worksheets below.

solutions

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## Caregiving Tasks

### Meals

- Meal planning
- Grocery shopping, food ordering/pickup
- Meal prep or packing
- Assisting caregivee with eating

### Personal care

- Morning/evening routine
- Assisting with bathing, grooming, dressing
- Assisting with toileting
- Assisting with mobility (walking, moving from chair to bed, etc.)
- Assisting with therapy home exercises (e.g., speech, physical, occupational)
- Home safety management (removing/storing dangerous items, reducing fall risks, etc.)

### Household tasks

- Managing mail, emails, calls
- Tidying and organizing
- Laundry
- Dishes
- Dusting and vacuuming
- Bathroom cleaning
- Sanitizing bottles or medical equipment
- Ordering/picking up household or medical supplies

### Transportation

- School or daycare pickup/dropoff
- Medical appointment pickup/dropoff
- Social/activity pickup/dropoff

### Medical

- Scheduling/rescheduling medical appointments
- Attending and managing medical appointments; taking notes
- Managing communication with medical providers and insurers
- Organizing, administering, and/or refilling prescriptions
- Organizing and managing medical paperwork
- Direct care for wounds, illness, etc.

### Financial

- Paying bills
- Budgeting
- Coordinating with financial assistance

### Social/Emotional

- Arranging/supervising outings (e.g., visits, social events, religious services)
- Tutoring or homework help
- Visits for conversation
- Assisting with hobbies

**Respite:** who can manage the caregiving responsibilities temporarily so the primary caregiver can attend to their own needs?

- Brief (a few hours)
- Single day
- Single evening
- Weekend
- Extended period

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# Help With Caregiving Tasks

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Return to your list. Circle or highlight the tasks you feel sure that **you want to manage yourself**. For example, if you attend all medical appointments with your caregivee, it may make sense to be in charge of scheduling them, taking notes, and managing medical paperwork.

3

Consider the **remaining tasks**. Are there any you could delegate?

- Yes (mark these and skip to part #5)
- No, I should do it, it's my responsibility / I can't burden someone else with this
- No, someone else would do it incorrectly / I don't have time to show them how
- No, my caregivee would not accept it if someone else did this task
- No, I don't have anyone to ask or I can't afford paid help (skip to part #6)

4

Consider your barriers to delegating tasks. When we're deeply stressed, it often feels more efficient to think in all-or-nothing terms - thoughts like:

- "It will just be easier or better if I do the **whole** thing"
- "This is **100%** my responsibility"
- "If I let someone help, they'll **never** get it right"

Sometimes this thinking is inaccurate. Is this kind of thinking happening for you?

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If so, let's take a look at a few options to push back against that kind of thinking.

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**Fast Forward:** imagine your situation stays exactly the same for 3 months, 6 months, 9 months, a year... Is that sustainable? Will you be living a healthy or balanced life?

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B

**Pass the Torch:** imagine that for some reason, you can no longer provide any care to your caregivee, and you need to assign all of your tasks to a loved one. Are you giving them a reasonable amount of work for one person?

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# Help With Caregiving Tasks

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**Break it Down:** Can you get help with part of a task? Not every part of every task needs your energy, or your expertise about your caregivee. For example, a helper might:

- Not administer prescription medications, but pick up prescriptions from the pharmacy
- Not plan or cook meals, but place grocery orders and manage delivery or pickup
- Not manage follow-up questions for a medical provider, but attend appointments to take notes
- Not pay bills, but organize mail, bills, and other paperwork for you
- Not manage a caregivee's calendar, but take them to one regular social outing (e.g., church)

Could you get help with part of some tasks?

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Think through people who can help: family members, friends, neighbors, etc. Has anyone in your life said, "Let me know how I can help"? Write down some potential helpers here.

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If you feel strange asking for help, consider sharing a short list of tasks you're willing to delegate, and asking if your helper(s) can pick one task that would be best for them.

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Consider outside help. If you're not sure how to find outside help, ask the professionals around your caregivee, like their doctor, teacher, social worker, therapist, etc. You can also check out our worksheet called "Get the Caregiving Support You Need" for resources and financial assistance ideas.

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Reach out! Just one call or text could potentially make a big difference. If you're nervous, write down what you'd like to say and practice. **Your long-term health and wellbeing are worth the temporary discomfort of asking for help.**



# Get the Caregiving Support You Need

Caregiving can be isolating, but **there may be more resources and help available than you may think.** This worksheet is designed to help you connect your burnout-related questions or concerns with caregiving resources that can help.

Question or Concern	Caregiving Resources to Consider
I'm having financial trouble with caregiving  I'm having trouble juggling work and caregiving	Learn about financial assistance for childcare, including for military families, at <a href="https://www.childcare.gov">ChildCare.gov</a>
	If your caregivee is disabled and on Medicaid, learn about becoming a paid caregiver (or other options if your caregivee is not on Medicaid or is a veteran) at <a href="https://www.usa.gov">USA.gov</a> .
	Learn about unpaid family medical leave (FMLA), which protects your jobs and benefits, from the <a href="https://www.dhs.gov/fmla">US Department of Labor</a>
I need resources for an elderly caregivee	The Administration for Community Living (ACL) provides an <a href="https://www.acl.gov/eldercare-locator">eldercare locator</a> , which can help you find resources including your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). AAAs are public or private non-profits that connect the elderly with services like in-home care, senior centers, community dining, transportation, and meal delivery.
	Search for in-home care, legal help, transportation, housing, and medical services with the Alzheimer's Association and AARP's <a href="https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/resources">community resource finder</a> .
	Find additional organizations specific to elderly caregivees on the Caregiver Action Network <a href="https://www.caregiveractionnetwork.org">site</a> .
I need resources for a caregivee with a specific psychological or medical condition	Visit the websites of national organizations or foundations for the condition itself. Many have caregiver pages (like the <a href="https://www.parkinson.org">Parkinson's Foundation</a> ), resource search tools (like the <a href="https://www.americancancersociety.org">American Cancer Society</a> ), or helplines (like the <a href="https://www.alz.org">Alzheimer's Association</a> ).
	Find additional organizations specific to health conditions on the Caregiver Action Network <a href="https://www.caregiveractionnetwork.org">site</a> .

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# Get the Caregiving Support You Need

Question or Concern	Caregiving Resources to Consider
I have so many questions about what to do next. How can I talk to someone knowledgeable?	Contact a caregiving expert via phone, email, or chat at the <a href="#">Caregiver Action Network</a> . Conversations are confidential and free.
I need someone to take care of my caregivee temporarily so I can take a break (respite).	Locate respite support through the <a href="#">ARCH National Respite Network</a> .
	Find additional organizations specific to respite on the <a href="#">Caregiver Action Network site</a> .
I need help with something specific.	<p>The <a href="#">Caregiver Action Network</a> has a wealth of information on topics like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tips for caregiving basics</li> <li>• End-of-life planning</li> <li>• Advocacy (making sure my or my caregivee's rights are respected and benefits are granted appropriately)</li> <li>• Health insurance</li> <li>• Prescription drug costs</li> <li>• Learning how to help with my caregivee's medical care</li> <li>• Clinical trials</li> <li>• Learning about legal documents related to caregiving</li> </ul> <p>They also provide a free, confidential <a href="#">helpdesk</a> for any questions you may have.</p>

**Are any caregiving resources relevant to my current challenges with burnout?**

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# Daily Rest Ritual for Caregivers

**Think about your typical day.** You might be juggling many different types important responsibilities.

Below, check off those that are relevant to you:

- |                                    |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work      | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing medical appointments | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning and laundry         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School    | <input type="checkbox"/> Paying bills and budgeting    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and errands   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and preparing meals  | <input type="checkbox"/> Handling unexpected problems |

During a typical day, do you have time to rest, unwind, or take care of yourself?

- Yes, I have this time regularly
- Only if all of my tasks for the day are complete
- Only when I feel I've done "enough" or earned rest time
- I only "rest" when I run out of energy and can't do anything
- I seem to be plugged in to caregiving, work, school, or other responsibilities all day
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If you did not check "yes" above, how does that aspect of your typical day affect your experiences of burnout?**

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It's important to disconnect from your responsibilities regularly, so your personal time is enjoyable and restorative. Creating a daily rest ritual is a great place to start.

To help you disconnect successfully, **pick an activity to signal to your brain that it's time to rest or take care of yourself.** Doing the same activity every day can help get your brain into resting mode. You might want to try the following:

### Tidy Space, Clear Mind

- Tidy your space
- Write down any to-dos for later
- Close your laptop or caregiving-related browser windows
- Put caregiving-related items away

### Make a Change

- Wash your face
- Wash your hands
- Change your clothes
- Take a shower
- Go outside for fresh air

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# Daily Rest Ritual for Caregivers

## Move Your Body

- Go for a walk
- Stretch
- Exercise
- Dance
- Spend time in nature

## Decompress

- Play with your kids or pet
- Listen to music or a podcast
- Work on a hobby
- Read for enjoyment
- Meditate for a few minutes

How do you feel at the end of the day emotionally?

If you typically feel an unpleasant emotion at the end of the day, you might also want to consider a rest ritual that helps you feel better.

If you often feel... disorganized or scatterbrained → write a list, organize, or tidy up  
drained, numb, or stagnant → make a change to freshen up  
angry, frustrated, or exasperated → burn those feelings off with exercise  
anxious or overwhelmed → decompress with your loved ones or interests

Could any of these ideas help you brush off the day? If not, what's a daily ritual that might work for you? *Try to avoid less healthy coping like alcohol, smoking, or scrolling.*

If a daily rest ritual worked well for you, how would you feel? What would be different?

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# Feeling Guilty About Rest or Time Off from Caregiving

We hear a lot of messages about hard work and rest. “I’ll sleep when I’m dead.” “Family always comes first.” “If you have time to rest, you must not be that busy.” “If you don’t help, you’re being lazy.” A strong work ethic is a powerful thing. But these messages can make us feel guilty for taking breaks and resting when we really need it, increasing the risk of burnout.

This worksheet was designed to help you explore messages that may have gotten under your skin - and prevent you from resting appropriately.

Read the beginning of each sentence, then finish it with the *first* thing that comes to mind:

- Self-care is

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- I’ll deserve rest when

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- People who deserve rest are

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- Hard work means

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- Laziness means

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- Good caregivers are people who

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- Bad caregivers are people who

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Reflect on your answers. What do they tell you about the messages you have heard?

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# Feeling Guilty About Rest or Time Off from Caregiving

How might these messages about work and rest affect your burnout?

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**Write some new messages.** Now think through some healthier messages about rest and hard work. What do **you** believe? What messages are more true, realistic, or fair? What messages can you hold onto when you need a break? Maybe these sound something like, “Rest is not a reward, it’s a necessity.” “My health is important.” “Rest makes my work better.” “We all deserve a break.”

Read the beginning of each sentence, then finish it with a healthier message that you believe:

- Self-care is

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- Rest is

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- Hard work means

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- Write your own message:

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- Write your own message:

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Make a plan for resting, taking breaks, or taking time off in the future:

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# Mental Patterns That Affect Caregiver Burnout

Caregiver burnout is tough for everyone, but it can be particularly difficult if you experience some common mental patterns. These patterns may have been helpful in the past, or might still be helpful in other contexts. But if caregiving is stressful, these patterns can contribute to burnout over time because they sap your energy and confidence.

Review the lists below, and check off any examples that you often struggle with while caregiving. If you can think of additional examples of each mental pattern that are relevant for you, feel free to add them to the end of the list.

## People-Pleasing

- Worries about people being unhappy with you or your caregiving
- Difficulty saying no because you don't want people to be upset or let down
- Saying yes to additional work, even if you're overwhelmed
- Often rescheduling your day to accommodate others' schedules
- Putting others' needs before your own
- Avoiding conflict or apologizing often (even when it isn't your fault)
- Always hoping for approval or reassurance
- Difficulty expressing your honest feelings or opinions
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Perfectionism

- Feeling uncomfortable or displeased if things aren't perfect
- Feeling imperfect caregiving would displease your caregivee
- Difficulty having others see or critique your caregiving
- Continuing to work on something after it's "good enough"
- Beating yourself up over mistakes
- Procrastinating because you worry something won't be good enough
- Struggling to delegate tasks or ask for help
- Feeling relief or exhaustion instead of pride when something is done
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Imposter Syndrome

- Feeling that people think you're more competent than you really are
- Thinking you're only successful due to luck or a fluke
- Feeling like it's only a matter of time before others realize you're not qualified
- Thinking that others are much more capable and talented than you
- Not believing or downplaying praise of your abilities or caregiving
- Doubting your skills or accomplishments, even though you've been successful
- Avoiding new challenges for fear of failure
- Overpreparing to avoid being "found out"
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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# Mental Patterns That Affect Caregiver Burnout

Self-Worth Defined by Caregiver Role

- Feeling bad about yourself as a person if caregiving is not going well
- Feeling useless or worthless if caregiving is not going well
- Feeling you're not worthy of respect or love if caregiving is not going well
- Having much higher self-esteem when caregiving is going well
- Feeling guilty, restless, or lost when you're not caregiving
- Feeling that your other qualities (e.g., being a good friend) don't matter
- Taking criticism of your caregiving very personally
- Neglecting relationships and self-care for caregiving tasks
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After checking off the examples that are relevant to you, reflect with the following questions:

**Do I tend to fall into one mental pattern, or multiple?**

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**Has my most common mental pattern(s) ever helped me in the past?**

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**How does my most common mental pattern(s) affect my caregiving?**

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# Mental Patterns That Affect Caregiver Burnout

What would caregiving be like if I didn't experience my most common mental pattern(s)?

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Consider the following ideas for ways to break each mental pattern:

## People-Pleasing

Practice saying things like:

- "I'm not available then. How about tomorrow?"
- "Due to my workload, I can't take on anything extra right now."
- "Right now, I need to prioritize [task]."

Challenge yourself to pause before:

- Saying yes - check your task list first
- Apologizing - are you actually at fault?

## Perfectionism

Make a conscious effort to:

- Celebrate when something is complete
- Challenge yourself to sit with the discomfort of mistakes rather than criticize yourself
- Focus on next steps rather than yourself or past mistakes (for example, "I need to get clarification from Mom's doctor" rather than "I can't believe I forgot to ask the doctor...")

## Imposter Syndrome

On your own:

- Make a list of your skills and accomplishments
- Purposely savor your successes

With others:

- Observe how others react to their mistakes and successes
- Say, "Thank you so much!" when you or your work is complimented rather than minimizing

## Self-Worth Defined By Caregiving Role

Explore:

- Your values and interests beyond caregiving
- What your loved ones think your positive qualities are
- Separating what you can actually control (e.g., asking questions, getting tasks done) versus what you wish you could control but cannot (e.g., genetics, disease progression)

Which pattern-breaker did you try? How did it go? What will you try next time?

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# Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

## You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



**325+**  
Companies Reviewed



**3,625+**  
Hours of Firsthand Experience



**1,545+**  
Data Points Analyzed



### [Best Online Therapy for Depression](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

### [Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



### [Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

### [Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.





# Tools for Self-Assessment and Psychoeducation

Figuring out the next step in your mental health journey can be overwhelming. Developed by psychologists, the tools at [ChoosingTherapy.com](https://choosingtherapy.com) can help. Our mental health self-assessment quizzes can help you explore common symptoms of mental health concerns, as well as find the best therapy style for you. Our mental health worksheets can guide you through therapy concepts and how to use them in your life.

## [Learn More with Mental Health Quizzes](#)

Our collection of psychologist-developed mental health quizzes can help you learn if you are experiencing mild, moderate, or concerning levels of anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, and more. Each quiz also provides targeted resources based on your answers. These self-assessments are designed to offer insight, not diagnoses, and can be a helpful first step in recognizing symptoms and deciding whether to seek further support. If you have concerns about your mental health or your quiz results, we recommend you reach out to a licensed mental health professional.



## [Free Mental Health Worksheets](#)

Search our collection of therapy worksheets by mental health topic, therapy modality, or demographic group. Our free, psychologist-developed worksheets make therapy exercises understandable and relevant to daily life. Find worksheets for help with ADHD, anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, and other common mental health challenges.