

Work 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 your work 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 in the workplace. 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 work
- 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 your work isn't perfect
- Disliking time constraints that would affect your work's quality
- Difficulty having others see or critique your work before it's done
- Continuing to work on something after it's "good enough"
- Beating yourself up over mistakes
- Procrastinating because you worry your work 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 only got your position 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 work
- Doubting your skills or accomplishments, even though you've been successful
- Avoiding new challenges for fear of failure
- Overpreparing to avoid being "found out"
- _____
- _____

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



Mental Patterns That Affect Work Burnout

Self-Worth Defined by Work

- Feeling bad about yourself as a person if work is not going well
- Feeling useless or worthless if work is not going well
- Feeling you're not worthy of respect or love if work is not going well
- Having much higher self-esteem when work is going well
- Feeling guilty, restless, or lost when you're not working
- Feeling that your other qualities (e.g., being a good friend) don't matter
- Taking work criticism very personally
- Neglecting relationships and self-care for work 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?

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

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

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

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 any extra projects right now."
- "Right now, I need to prioritize [project]."

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 a project is complete
- Welcome and breathe through feedback earlier in your process
- Focus on criticizing *the project*, not yourself (e.g., "The wording needs improvement," not, "I phrased this poorly")
- Embrace quick, messy first attempts

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 Work

Explore:

- Your values and interests outside of work
- What a great life would look like to you, and what elements besides work are important
- What your loved ones think your positive qualities are
- Reframing criticism from chastisement to opportunities to improve your project

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.