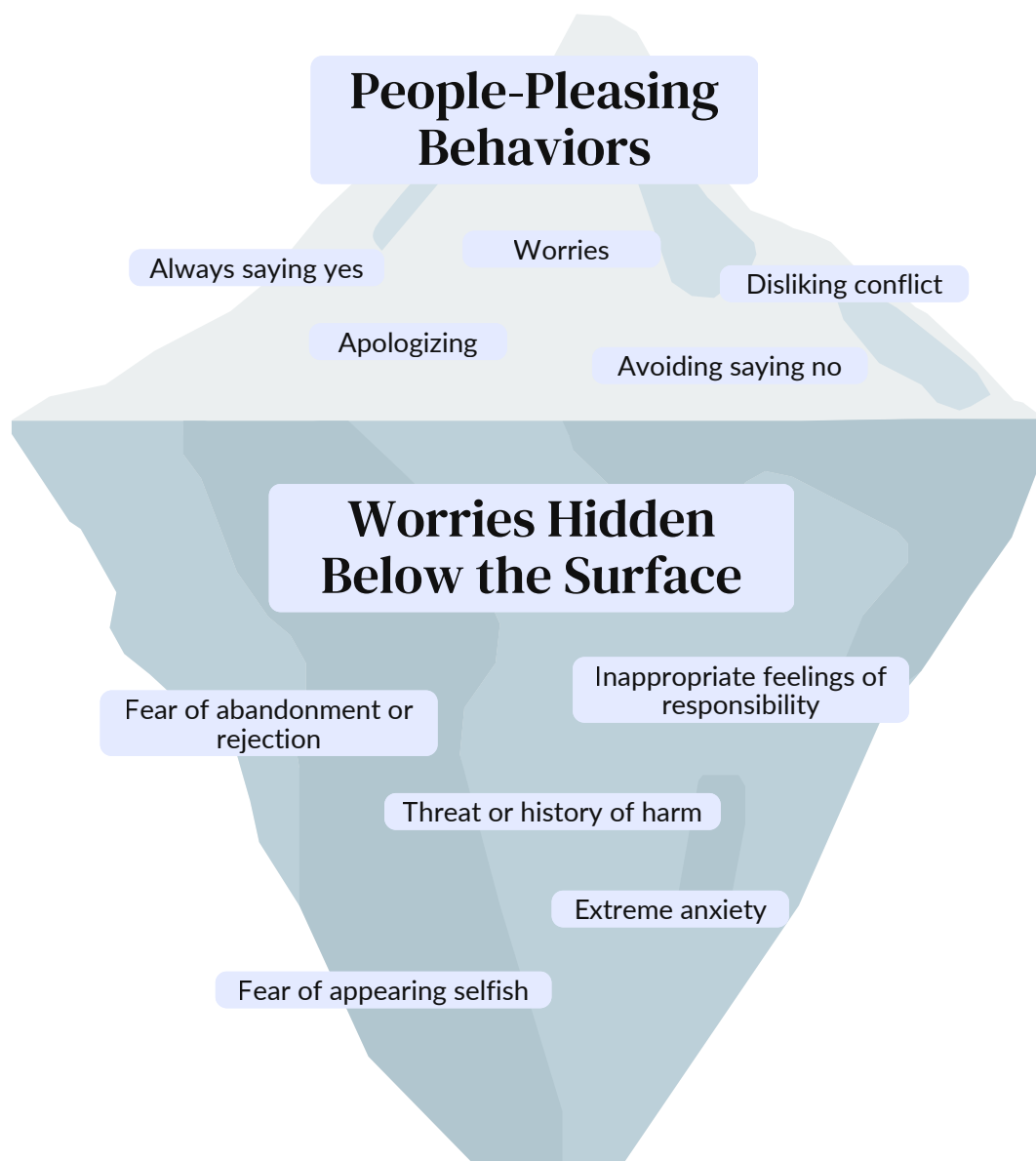


People-Pleasing

People-pleasers are often deeply empathetic people who care about the feelings and opinions of others. From the outside, this deep care can look like always saying yes, rarely saying no, and avoiding conflict. **However, on the inside, people-pleasing can be much more complicated.**

People-pleasing can be motivated by a variety of worries hidden below the surface. Some individuals might be trying to avoid abandonment or rejection, while others feel inappropriately responsible for making sure everyone is happy all the time. Many people might have multiple worries hidden below.

This worksheet is designed to help you recognize your own people-pleasing behaviors, explore the worries motivating them, evaluate your worries, and find a new way forward, starting with small, approachable changes.



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



People-Pleasing

People-pleasing behaviors

Check off any behaviors in the list below that you often struggle with:

- Worries about people being unhappy with you or your behavior
- Difficulty saying no because you don't want people to be upset or let down
- Saying yes to things, 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
- Feeling responsible for things that aren't your responsibility
- Feeling very upset if someone is annoyed or disappointed with you
- Difficulty telling others they've hurt your feelings
- Difficulty disagreeing with others

Worries hidden below the surface

Take a moment to think about the following statement: *If I displease people, then _____*.
Fill in the blank in your mind. What do you worry would happen if you displeased someone in your life? Does your worry sound like any of these below? If so, check the appropriate box(es).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
They won't like me, or they'll think poorly of me. They'll reject me and I'll be all alone. That's too dangerous or painful. | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Neglect
No one will care about me. I won't have anyone who will make me a priority or care about my needs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abandonment
It will be even harder to keep people around. Too many people around me are unreliable or unavailable already. | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Worthy
People will see me as selfish, needy, or bossy. They might criticize me, or I might see myself as a bad or unworthy person. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt or Harm
Other people will insult me, put me down, or really stress me out. It just isn't worth it to displease people around me. | <input type="checkbox"/> It's My Job
Everything will feel wrong, like I'm being mean or uncaring. It's my responsibility to make people happy. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme Anxiety
I'll feel way too anxious. I'll be worrying constantly about what they think of me or something bad that might happen. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress Response
...When there are demands or conflicts, people-pleasing feels like the only option available to me because I'm so stressed. |

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People-Pleasing

Where did these worries come from?

Worries hidden below the surface are complicated. They can come from many sources, like:

- How you were raised, including aspects of your identity like your culture or gender
- Real experiences of rejection, abandonment, neglect, or harm
- A personal or family history of anxiety, depression, or low self-esteem
- Messages you've heard over and over again from people around you, the media, etc.

Take a moment to reflect. Where do you think your worries hidden below the surface came from?

Have your worries ever been right?

Have you ever had experiences in which your worries below the surface were correct?

For example: When I stood up to Lisa in high school, she stopped being my friend.

Have your worries ever been wrong?

Have you ever had experiences in which your worries below the surface were incorrect?

For example: When I disagree with or say no to my siblings and best friend, they still love and care about me.

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People-Pleasing

Would you *choose* these worries if you could?

Pretend for a moment that you're writing a guidebook for a happy, healthy life. You need to choose the most important ideas to go in your chapter on interacting with others in a positive way. Are any of your worries under the surface *worthy, accurate, healthy, or helpful* enough to go in your book? If so, why? If not, why not?

What would you like to guide your life instead?

If you said no to the question above, what ideas would you like to guide your life instead? **You might not believe these ideas yet, and that's okay.** These might sound like:

- My thoughts and feelings are just as important as everyone else's
- I can tolerate it if other people are displeased with me
- I can speak up for myself and express my opinion
- It's not selfish to disagree or have my own needs
- It's not my responsibility to make sure everyone is happy all the time
- If people treat me poorly, I don't have to put up with it just to keep the peace

Write your own guiding ideas below:



People-Pleasing

**Think back,
think ahead**

Remember a few times you've people-pleased in the past. What was the situation? What did you do? How did you feel? Then, think about what it would be like if you **truly, 100%, confidently** believed your new guiding idea(s). What would you do or say? How would you feel? We've provided two examples to get you started.

Situation	What happened in the past		If I <i>truly</i> believed my guiding idea	
	What I did	How I felt	What I would do	How I would feel
My boss asked me to work late My family member insulted me	Said "yes" Said nothing, looked away	Stressed and resentful Holding in anger and hurt	Say, "Sorry, I can't today" Speak up for myself	Calm and confident Hurt, but not worthless



Scan or [click here](#) to learn more
about people-pleasing:

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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](#)

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://www.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.