

# Work Burnout Workbook

Learn more about work burnout, how it affects you, and effective strategies for managing it at work and at home with seven exercises.

- **Identifying Work Burnout**
- **Workplace Red & Green Flags**
- **Workplace Solutions**
- **Personal Solutions**

# Work Burnout Workbook

Work burnout can arise from a complex mix of personal stressors and workplace demands. **This workbook is designed to help you get to know your work burnout and learn about effective solutions that are a good fit for you.** With a combination of workplace solutions like problem-solving and time management and personal solutions like challenging difficult mental patterns around work and time off, you can push towards alleviating your stress.

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

## Identifying Work Burnout

This worksheet introduces common symptoms of work burnout, as well as links you to our free work burnout quiz.

## Workplace Red and Green Flags

Assess the health of your workplace, and **learn which of the worksheets below are the best fit for you based on your answers.**

workplace  
solutions

### Problem-Solving at Work

This worksheet will help you articulate problems at work and prepare for a productive conversation with management about potential solutions.

### Time and Task Management at Work

Review tips for managing your time and workload, and organize and schedule your work tasks by priority with this worksheet.

personal  
solutions

### End of Workday Ritual

This worksheet will help you “leave work at work” with a clear end of workday ritual.

### Feeling Guilty About Rest or Time Off

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 Work Burnout

This worksheet helps you explore mental patterns that affect work 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 Work Burnout

**Work burnout happens when there is a mismatch between a person's capacities and the demands of their work.** People might experience work burnout because they are going through stress, health, or caregiving challenges, which could deplete their energy and make working harder. However, burnout can also happen if the demands on an employee are unrealistic, or if their workplace is unfair.

If you're wondering if you are experiencing work burnout, we encourage you to try our [free work 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 work burnout below:

Feeling less competent at work, like you're not performing as well as before	Procrastinating, avoiding tasks, or avoiding work 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 work	Feeling cynical or pessimistic about your work, coworkers, or clients

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

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

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# Workplace Red and Green Flags





Burnout is more than an employee struggling with stress, or having trouble keeping up with work demands. [Decades of research show that the qualities of the workplace contribute to work burnout, too.](#) This worksheet is designed to help you think through which workplace factors might be contributing to your work burnout.

Take a look at each of the workplace factors and their descriptions below. Circle the flag next to the sentence that best describes your experience at work.\*\*





## Workload

-  My workload is sustainable, and I have time to learn new skills at a comfortable pace
-  My workload is sustainable
-  My workload is high
-  My workload is so high that I can't get everything done, or I can't seem to recover from work demands





## Control

-  I have control over my work, and my decisions are respected
-  I have decent control over my work
-  I have little control over my work
-  I have little control over my work, and demands on me are confusing or contradictory





## Reward

-  I'm paid well and I feel emotionally satisfied with my work
-  I'm paid well
-  I'm not paid well
-  I'm not paid well, and rewards are scarce or unfairly given

## Community

-  I'm part of a team that works well together, supports its members, and resolves conflict well
-  My team works together fairly well
-  My team does not work together well
-  My team has frequent conflict and is generally negative

## Fairness

-  Decisions at my job are made fairly and I feel respected
-  Things seem pretty fair at my job
-  Things seem pretty unfair at my job
-  Decisions at my job are made unfairly and I feel disrespected





\*\*For those who have difficulty with color blindness, or who are printing in black and white, the flags are ordered green, light green, pink, then red.

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# Workplace Red and Green Flags

Values

-  My personal values and the values of my workplace are well-aligned
-  There is good alignment between my personal values and the values of my workplace
-  There is poor alignment between my personal values and the values of my workplace
-  My job requires me to do work that goes against my values

Does my workplace have any red or pink flags? If so, which most contribute to burnout?

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Are there any solutions *within your control* that might help? These might look like:

- Discussing changes to your workload, tasks, role, or team with management
- Denying or delegating requests when your workload is high
- Maintaining stronger boundaries (e.g., not responding to requests after working hours)
- Seeking help for conflict resolution between team members
- Finding mentorship or support at work or within your larger industry
- Preparing to ask for a raise or promotion
- Bringing problems and potential solutions to management
- Learning new time management strategies
- Other: .....

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

If these problems are largely *outside of your control*, what can you focus on going forward?

- "Leaving work at work" with an end of workday 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 the workplace (e.g., loved ones, mental health professionals)
- Good self-care, social, spiritual, and physical habits to keep yourself healthy
- Living a rich, meaningful life outside of work by doing what matters to you
- Searching for a position that is a better fit (e.g., working conditions, values, pay)
- Other: .....

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

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If part of your work burnout is a problem with workload, excessive requests, team procedures, etc., communicating these problems with your boss or manager might be a positive way forward. **A little bit of preparation for these conversations can go a long way.** This worksheet is designed to help you articulate the problem and prepare for an effective conversation.

## 1 Take a first pass at stating the problem

*This doesn't have to be perfect. Just practice.*

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## 2 Check the facts

*Refer to documents like your job description and company policies.*

These can help you think through which workplace factors are problematic more specifically.

- Your job description should specify your role, primary responsibilities, hours of work, etc.
- Your company policy document should specify expectations for conduct, communication, safety, roles and responsibilities, how to report violations, disciplinary procedures, etc.

Do I have the documentation I need to refer to?

- Yes
- No, but I will find or request it
- No, I can't get access to these, but I'll find a similar document online

*notes*

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## 3 Document problems...

*Collect or document the specifics.*

It's also important to prepare documentation of problematic workplace factors. Copy relevant emails, messages, performance reviews, etc. in a private place (not on your work computer).

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Documentation of problematic workplace experiences might include:

- Requests to complete more tasks than are possible within your working hours
- Requests outside of your scope of responsibilities
- Requests made at the last minute, or expecting work outside of your working hours
- Incidents, dates, and people involved in cases of unfair treatment

Do I have the documentation of problematic workplace experiences I need?

- Yes
- No, but I will document this

notes

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**...And their effects**

*Document the effects of workplace problems.*

It's also important to document the *impact* a workplace problem is having on your work. When inappropriate requests come in, how much time are they taking away from your primary responsibilities, or your personal time outside of your working hours? How does unfair treatment affect you, and what roadblocks does unfair treatment create at work?

Have I documented the effects of workplace problems?

- Yes
- No, but I will document this

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**Brainstorm solutions**

*Come prepared with ideas.*

Balance asking management for help solving these problems with suggestions for solutions. You are the expert in your workload and experience. Take some time to brainstorm some solutions that would actually help your situation, so you can demonstrate that you are engaged and invested.

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Focus on solutions a reasonable manager would likely approve. Can you:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delegate certain tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> Change a procedure | <input type="checkbox"/> Adjust tasks or role |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjust timelines       | <input type="checkbox"/> Resolve conflicts  | <input type="checkbox"/> Find support         |

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## 6 Get the focus right *Focus on facts, not feelings.*

Try to keep the focus on the assignments, tasks, and outcomes - the facts. This keeps the conversation fairly neutral, and demonstrates that you can articulate a problem and a solution.

- Avoid self-blame for problems that are not actually your fault. If a workflow is unreasonable or impossible, or how you are being treated is inappropriate, keep the focus there.
- Be careful about sharing your feelings. Your feelings do matter, but there is a risk the problem could be attributed to you (“Oh, they’re just easily stressed out”) rather than the unreasonable workflow or unfair treatment.

## 7 Restate the problem *Now that you’ve prepared, restate the problem, focused on facts, effects, and possible solutions.*

*For example: “For the past month, I’ve been receiving urgent, last-minute requests outside of my scope of work. I can show you these requests if that would be helpful. They take up time that should be focused on my primary responsibilities, and sometimes require time outside of my working hours. I’d like to discuss possible procedures to re-route or delegate these requests.”*

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# Time and Task Management at Work

Managing your time, tasks, and habits at work can make a big difference in how work feels and reducing the risk of burnout. This worksheet covers tips for breaks, boundaries, and WFH, then guides you through task prioritization and time blocking to help you stay in balance at work.

## Non-Negotiable Breaks

Whether you're guaranteed regular breaks every day or you manage your own schedule, make it a habit to **actually take breaks**. If at all possible, try to take them:

- Away from your workspace
- In fresh air
- In sunlight if you work inside, in shade if you work outside
- Away from screens

Breaks refresh our minds and help us check in with our bodies when we're probably used to ignoring them through the workday.



How often do you take breaks during a typical workday, including for a meal?

- 0 times  1 time  2 times  3 times  4+ times

## Hold Your Boundaries

**Boundaries** can be tough to hold, but they protect your time and energy. Check off any examples that might help in your work situation:

- Mute work notifications during non-work hours and practice responding only during work hours, even if it's uncomfortable. If this seems drastic, start by muting during some of your non-work hours, then most, then all.
- Talk about the work, not yourself. Try something like, "My *priorities* and *projects* are already set for the quarter, so unfortunately there is no room for additional projects," rather than, "I'd love to help, but I can't make time for that right now."
- Get your manager's help with prioritizing: "There is not enough time in my schedule to complete all three projects by the due date. Which would you like me to de-prioritize?"

## If You Work From Home

**Working from home** can be very convenient, but it can psychologically blur the lines between work and home. Separating the two is key! You might want to:

- Turn off and put your work-related devices away at the end of the day
- Create a work-only zone if you can: a room, corner, or desk for work that is physically separate from the rest of your life
- Take breaks focused on walking or stretching rather than looking at screens or sitting on the couch
- Dress in "work clothes" (whatever that means for you) to signal to your brain that it's time to work - and change clothes when the workday is over



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## Prep the Calendar

Write in your working days and hours in the first row and first column

5

## Add Scheduled Meetings and Breaks

Add your scheduled meetings to the calendar. Then be sure to schedule in breaks on each day so you prioritize them!

6

## Schedule in Time Blocks

Consider scheduling dedicated blocks of time for deep work with no interruptions and muted notifications. You can also block separate time for responding to messages, emails, etc.

7

## Schedule Your Eisenhower Tasks

Refer to the previous page of organized tasks. Here are recommendations for how to prioritize and schedule them:

- (A): complete as soon as possible
- (B): schedule for completion soon
- (C): quickly delegate these tasks
- (D): do not complete

If you can't control which tasks you're assigned or can't delegate them, consider scheduling a few brief time blocks per week to knock these tasks out quickly. But don't sacrifice your deep work time dedicated to (A) and (B) tasks.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Hour 1					
Hour 2					
Hour 3					
Hour 4					
Hour 5					
Hour 6					
Hour 7					
Hour 8					
Hour 9					
Hour 10					



Scan or [click here](#) to learn more about work burnout:

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# End of Workday Ritual

**Think about the end of your workday.** At school, the end of the day was pretty straightforward - a ringing bell clearly signaled it was time to go home. What signals the end of your workday now?

- A bell ringing       Clocking out       Workers arriving for the next shift  
 The time on the clock       Locking up       Other \_\_\_\_\_

If there is no clear signal, how do you determine when your workday ends?

- When all of my tasks for the day are complete  
 When I feel I've done "enough"  
 When I run out of energy  
 My workday doesn't really end - I stay available/check on things for the rest of the day  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If you checked a "no clear signal" box above, how does that aspect of your work affect your experiences of burnout?**

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It's important to **disconnect** from work when the day is done, so your personal time is enjoyable and restorative. Creating a ritual that signals the end of the workday and the beginning of your personal time is a great way to do kickstart this process - especially if your job provides no clear signal.

Here's a list of ideas for a transition ritual to consider:

## Tidy Space, Clear Mind

- Tidy your workspace
- Write down any to-dos for tomorrow
- Close your laptop or work-related browser windows
- Put work-related items away for the day

## Make a Change

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

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# End of Workday Ritual

## Move Your Body

- Go for a walk
- Stretch
- Exercise
- Dance
- Garden or do yardwork

## 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 workday emotionally?**

If you typically feel an unpleasant emotion at the end of the workday, you might also want to consider a transition 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 workday? If not, what's a daily ritual that might work for you? Try to avoid less healthy coping like alcohol, smoking, or scrolling.**

**If an end of workday 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 Work

We hear a lot of messages about hard work and rest. “I’ll sleep when I’m dead.” “The grind never stops.” “Self-care is just an excuse to be selfish or lazy.” “Other people don’t need breaks or time off.” “Time is money.” 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 workers are people who

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- Bad workers 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 Work

How might these messages about work and rest affect your work 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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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"
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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# 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?**

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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 work?**

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What would work 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 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.