

Managing Mental Load



Managing everyday life can be tiring, even when you are only thinking about yourself. When you add a partner, kids, and a long list of responsibilities into the mix, it can feel overwhelming. **This is where the idea of *mental load* comes in.** Mental load is the invisible work it takes to keep life running smoothly. This includes planning, organizing, remembering tasks, and thinking ahead, often for others too.

Mental load is common in caregiving and household roles, and women often carry most of it. This can lead to stress, burnout, and feeling constantly overwhelmed. Over time, it may affect both mental and physical health, causing anxiety, tiredness, and even long-term health problems.

Learning how to manage mental load and take care of yourself is an important step toward protecting your well-being and living a more balanced life.

Strategies to lighten your mental load:

1. **Recognize the mental load** - Acknowledge that mental load is real and exhausting. Identify what is mainly contributing to it. This can help validate your feelings and identify how to manage it.
2. **Make task lists** – Write down all your tasks, even the ones that feel automatic. Use calendars, to-do lists, or apps (such as the reminders app) to ease the pressure of competing tasks.
3. **Set boundaries and have open conversations** – Share your needs and limits with others. Learn it is okay to say no when you have too much on your plate.
4. **Ask for help and delegate tasks.** – Find tasks that can be shared and let others take responsibility. Do not be afraid to ask for support.
5. **Find time for self-care** – Do things that help you relax and recharge, like hobbies or taking short breaks during the day.

How to support someone with a heavy mental load:

1. **Be proactive** – Try to offer help before being asked. E.g., prepare a grocery list.
2. **Give solutions** - Work together to find ways to share responsibilities. E.g., splitting chores.
3. **Be patient and check in** – Listen and validate their feelings. Ask what support they need instead of guessing. You can lead the conversation by asking “How can I help today?”
4. **Show appreciation** – Say thank you and recognize their efforts. A small gift, a kind note, or encouraging words can go a long way.

Supporting each other is key to managing mental load. If you or someone you know is struggling with ongoing stress or mental health challenges, talk to a mental health professional for further support. The [Employee and Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) is a great place to start. It offers free counselling and a variety of resources that promote emotional and physical well-being.

