



SPACE TO BREATHE THERAPY

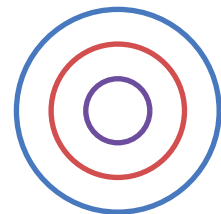
MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH / POCKET GUIDE

The Cost of Carrying Everything Alone

A shorter guide to recognising hidden pressure, sharing responsibility and finding support.

There is more to strength than coping alone.

Pressure can build quietly. One honest conversation or one practical change can make the load easier to carry.



A reminder

You are allowed to be supported, too. Asking for help does not make you any less capable.

A short, practical companion to the full guide



When being dependable starts to hurt

Some men become the person everyone relies on. They work, remember bills, solve problems, care for others and say “I’ll sort it” even when they are exhausted. Because they keep functioning, the strain may be difficult for anyone else to see.

Responsibility can be meaningful. Isolation begins when it feels unsafe or impossible to share it. Messages such as “be strong” or “don’t complain” may make it harder to admit fear, sadness or uncertainty. Being capable does not mean having unlimited capacity.

What might be going unnoticed?

Think about the work you do that others rarely see: anticipating problems, managing money, checking on family or keeping emotions hidden.

Reflect

What is one responsibility that feels heavier than other people realise?

For example: organising appointments, being the one who always stays calm, or worrying about bills.



How overload may show itself

Distress does not always look like sadness. You may notice irritability, going quiet, feeling numb, losing interest, difficulty concentrating, disrupted sleep, tension or tiredness. Some people work longer, withdraw from friends or rely more heavily on alcohol, gambling or scrolling to switch off.

These changes are not a diagnosis, and physical symptoms can have other causes. What matters is noticing what has changed and how it affects your life. Persistent, new or worrying symptoms deserve attention from a healthcare professional.

A useful check-in

Consider changes in your sleep, mood, patience, relationships and body over the past few weeks. You do not have to explain everything perfectly to ask for support.

Reflect

What is one early sign that you are carrying too much?

For example: snapping at small things, cancelling plans, headaches or lying awake worrying.



Work, money and invisible pressure

Money worries can follow you even when you are working hard. Bills, debt, uncertain hours or feeling behind in your career can become more than practical concerns: they may begin to feel like a judgement about your worth. Your circumstances do not measure your value.

Some pressures are less visible. ADHD may make starting, planning or finishing tasks harder; dyscalculia may make numbers, money or time calculations difficult. These are not signs of laziness or low intelligence. Clear instructions, reminders and practical adjustments can help.

Make the next step smaller

Instead of trying to fix everything, choose one specific pressure. It might help to request a deadline extension, sit with someone while opening a letter, or ask for information in writing.

Reflect

Which pressure could become more manageable with one adjustment?

For example: a shared calendar, help with a form, a clearer work task or a payment conversation.



A small way to share the load

You do not have to solve every problem today. Try sorting what you carry into three groups: what you need to keep doing, what you could share, and what you can pause or change. Choose one task that drains you and ask what would make it smaller.

Start with one honest sentence

"I've been saying I'm fine, but I'm struggling. Could you listen for ten minutes?"

"Could you help me with one practical thing this week? I don't need you to solve everything."

If you are supporting someone, try noticing rather than labelling: "You seem worn out lately. How have things been?" Ask whether they want listening, ideas or practical help, and check in again later.

My next small step

What is one task you could share, simplify or put aside?

For example: asking someone to make a call with you, or delaying a non-urgent commitment.



Your plan for a harder day

A short plan can help when it becomes difficult to think clearly. You can write a few words, type into the boxes or talk the questions through with somebody you trust.

One sign I need support

For example: withdrawing, poor sleep or feeling on edge.

One person or service I could contact

For example: a friend, GP, counsellor or support line.

One kind of help I could ask for

For example: someone to listen, a lift or help with a form.

One thing that can wait

For example: a non-urgent task or an unrealistic expectation.

You do not have to earn care by reaching breaking point. One conversation, one boundary or one shared task is a meaningful place to start.



Support and further reading

You can speak to a trusted person, your GP, a counsellor or a specialist service without having a diagnosis or a perfect explanation. If the first person cannot help, you can try someone else.

NHS Talking Therapies

In England, adults can self-refer for support with anxiety and depression. Search NHS Talking Therapies.

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Support relating to suicide and suicidal thoughts. Visit the CALM website for current contact options and hours.

Mind

Mental health information, including recognising symptoms and finding support.

NHS ADHD in adults

Information about adult ADHD and routes to assessment and support.

Cambridge University Hospitals — Dyscalculia

An introduction to dyscalculia and how it can affect everyday tasks.

If you need urgent help

In England, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E. Routes vary across the UK; use your local urgent mental health service.

This guide offers general information and does not replace individual medical or psychological advice.