

Do You Feel Like a Burden?

What to Know

Teens who have thoughts of harming themselves often feel like they are a burden on others. Feeling like a burden is like carrying a heavy load that weighs you down or makes everything harder in life. It's that feeling when you think you're causing trouble or making things difficult for others. You may even believe that others would be better off without you.

You may think you:

- disappoint others.
- are a financial burden to your family.
- take up too much of others' time.
- take more from others than you contribute to them.

Feeling like you are a burden can creep up on you and make you forget all the ways you positively contribute to other people's lives. You might believe your worth—and the value of your life—is based on what you give to other people.

You may view your relationships as being one-sided—like you are receiving support but not giving it back. When you feel like a burden, remember that your relationships work both ways. Maybe you need more support right now, but someday you will support others in need.

Just being YOU is often so valued by others that they never feel like you are a burden. Recognizing your value to others can help to balance out thoughts of being a burden.

What to Do

Write down all the things you do that make people value and appreciate you, such as being a good friend, helping at home, or just being there for others.

Think about all the ways you've helped others in the past. Have you helped your parent or guardian with a project? Listened when a friend needed to vent? Helped

your sibling with homework? Cared for a neighbor's pet? Mowed the lawn or shoveled snow? Write down anything that comes to mind.

Write down ways you might contribute to others in the future.

Describe what feeling like a burden means to you. How does it affect your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors?

Can you recall specific situations where you felt like a burden? What triggered these feelings?

How did you react or behave when you felt this way? Did it change how you interacted with others?

List any negative thoughts or beliefs you have about yourself that contribute to feeling like a burden.

Are these thoughts based on facts or assumptions? Can you challenge their accuracy? Why or why not?

Who are the people in your life who have shown support and care for you? How have they helped you feel valued and appreciated?

What qualities do these people possess that make you feel comfortable opening up to them?

Are you comfortable expressing your feelings and needs to others? Why or why not?

Is it hard for you to set boundaries or ask for help when you need it? Why or why not?

Create a list of positive affirmations or statements that counteract the feeling of being a burden. For example: "I am worthy of love and support," or "I contribute positively to the lives of those around me."

What activities or practices help you feel more confident and self-assured? (e.g., sports, part-time job, academics, exercise, etc.)

What steps can you take to challenge negative thoughts and cultivate a healthier self-perception?

Set 3 achievable goals to improve your self-esteem and reduce feelings of being a burden. These could be small steps like reaching out to a friend each day or practicing self-care regularly. Be specific!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Reflect on your responses and consider discussing them with a loved one, counselor, or someone else you trust. Remember, feeling like a burden is a common experience, but it doesn't define your worth. Practice self-compassion and be patient with yourself as you work through these feelings.

One daily activity you could practice to help reduce your feelings of being a burden is practicing gratitude journaling. Gratitude journaling involves taking a few minutes each day to reflect on and write down things you are thankful for or appreciate in your life. This practice can help shift your focus from negative thoughts about being a burden to acknowledging all the positive things in your life.

Here's a simple way to start:

1. Set aside a specific time each day, perhaps before bed or in the morning after you wake up, to write in your gratitude journal. It could be a physical notebook, a digital document, or an app designed for journaling.
2. Write down at least three things you are grateful for each day. These could be simple things like a supportive friend, a kind gesture, a delicious meal, a sunny day, or any positive experience or aspect of your life.
3. Reflect on why you are grateful for each item you've listed. Try to feel the emotions associated with these moments or things.
4. Make it a habit by using the following chart to record your journaling for the next 30 days.

Practicing gratitude journaling regularly can help shift your focus from negative thoughts of being a burden to acknowledging the support and positives in your life. Over time, this practice can contribute to an improved mindset and a greater sense of appreciation for yourself and the world around you.

Day	Did you write in your journal? Y / N	Write down how you feel after journaling
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Reflections on This Exercise

What was challenging about this exercise? Be specific.

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
