

THE MENTAL LOAD OF *Caregiving* vs. Managing Illness

When it comes to navigating life with illness together, both individuals in a mixed-ability relationship can easily become mentally exhausted. No one is expected to keep up with everything all the time. There is a lot to manage when it comes to daily life and wellness.

We believe that communication opens the door to expression and understanding, allowing couples to come together and see each other more clearly.

The worksheet below is designed to help you articulate what you're experiencing and to better understand what your partner is going through.

How to use this worksheet: Set aside 15-30 minutes to individually fill out the questions below. Then come together and share your answers – allowing space for your partner to speak and be heard. Afterward, create an action plan to help support each other through this phase of mental exhaustion.

The invisible things running through your mind:

What responsibilities do you carry mentally, even when you're not actively doing them?

What situations make your brain feel like it's "always on"?

Articulating mental fatigue:

When my mental load feels overwhelming, it usually looks like...

Something I wish people understood about my exhaustion is...

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What my partner might not see:

A worry that stays in the background of my mind is....

When I go quiet, it's often because I'm thinking about....

Translating from complaints to expressed needs:

When I feel overwhelmed, what helps most is...

I feel most supported when you....

Questions for discussion:

What part of your partner's experience helped you understand them better?

Where do your mental loads overlap?

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Action Plan:

One thing I will try to communicate more clearly is...

One way I can support my partner's mental load is...