



OVERWHELM CHEAT SHEET: 25 SOURCES & 25 STRATEGIES

Welcome!

"I'm overwhelmed." If I had a dollar for every time a client said this during their very first session with me, I don't think I'd have to work another day in my life.

There are a lot of reasons people are overwhelmed these days. The word "overwhelm" seems kind of like a catchall phrase at this point, used when you can't pinpoint specific reasons for *why* you're overwhelmed. I get it, it feels automatic to say! But the challenge is that you end up referring to *all* of the challenges you're facing without having to identify each one individually. And if you don't identify the sources of your overwhelm, how are you supposed to help yourself with it?!

This Overwhelm Cheat Sheet is going to help you pinpoint those individual stressors. Think of it as a personalized inventory to understanding what's really weighing on you!

My mission is to bring my unique therapy exercises to your inbox, making self-help comfortable in your own space at your own pace! TM

greta

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IDENTIFY THE SOURCES OF YOUR OVERWHELM

Check the sources of overwhelm below and notate which ones resonate with you.
If many of them resonate with you, that's okay!

SOURCES OF OVERWHELM	
Mental Load at Home	juggling the chores, meal planning, childcare, and family schedule
Career Expectations	having good work performance, looking toward advancement
Sensory Overstimulation	an influx of sensory input that exceeds your brain's capacity
Financial Pressure	striving for stability, paying bills, saving enough, paying off debt
Social Media Comparison	feeling inadequate from constant exposure to curated lifestyles and ideals
Parenting Challenges	making decisions, supporting children, disciplining
Caretaking Responsibilities	caring for aging parents or family members
Body Image Pressure	viewing unrealistic body ideals, body concerns, self-esteem issues
Relationship Strain	managing romantic relationships, friendships, and family dynamics
Work-Life Struggles	balancing work, personal life, and self-care
Health Concerns	managing and coping with physical or mental health conditions
Information Overload	viewing constant news updates, texts, emails, and notifications
Perfectionistic Expectations	burning yourself out trying to meet unrealistic standards of perfection
Time Constraints	finding time for self-care / hobbies / personal interests amidst a busy schedule
Multi-tasking Demands	attempting to juggle both home and work tasks at the same time
Technology Dependency	relying on tech for work, communication, entertainment, and information
Societal Expectations	conforming to the roles, appearance, and behaviors that society lays out for you
Environmental Concern	worrying about climate change, pollution, and sustainability
Political Turmoil	coping with political unrest and social injustices
Navigating Social Dynamics	managing social obligations while maintaining boundaries
Career Transitions	adjusting to job changes, promotions, or career shifts
Economic Uncertainty	dealing with economic fluctuations and job insecurity
Negative Self-View	struggling with heavy feelings of guilt or self-doubt
Sleep Disturbances	dealing with sleep issues, insomnia, or disrupted sleep patterns
Cultural / Diversity Pressures	navigating cultural expectations, challenges, and societal biases



here's the good stuff...

For each of the stressors you've checked, I've got a different strategy for you to try for each of them! Take a look at the stressors that are the biggest causes of your overwhelm. Think about what it would be like to implement just one or two of the strategies. A little goes a long way, and while we can't get rid of all of life's stresses, we can at least give ourselves a break from holding it all at the same time!

If many sources resonate with you, start first with implementing a strategy that would really decrease a big part of your overwhelm. You can work your way through them once you find what works for you!

SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR THE OVERWHELM

Keep track with this checklist which strategies you either want to try or have tried! You'll see the best results if you try a strategy a few times, as if you're practicing a new skill.

STRATEGIES TO TARGET EACH SOURCE OVERWHELM	
Mental Load at Home	implement a shared family calendar & communicate about your mental load
Career Expectations	set realistic boundaries for the capabilities you have <i>now</i>
Sensory Overstimulation	pick one of your senses and make an environmental change to decrease its input
Financial Pressure	create a simple goal for quick momentum (use a budget app to track it!)
Social Media Comparison	unfollow accounts that don't serve you positively
Parenting Challenges	establish regular family get-togethers to discuss the current highs and lows
Caretaking Responsibilities	seek support from support groups and ask for help when you need it
Body Image Pressure	practice body neutrality and appreciation instead of admiration
Relationship Strain	prioritize a fun activity for quality time, like conversation cards or a game
Work-Life Struggles	set strict boundaries for personal time and schedule regular self-care activities
Health Concerns	schedule and attend regular doctor appointments for peace of mind
Information Overload	eliminate your phone notifications <i>or</i> set time limits for them
Perfectionistic Expectations	practice self-compassion when you're being self-critical
Time Constraints	use the Eisenhower Matrix to prioritize what needs your attention the most
Multi-tasking Demands	practice mindfulness of starting one task from start to finish
Technology Dependency	go outside for fun activity or see a friend in-person without phones
Societal Expectations	embrace your authenticity by doing a values-based exercise
Environmental Concern	donate your clothes instead of tossing them in the trash
Political Turmoil	engage in activism and advocacy groups in your community
Navigating Social Dynamics	prioritize the social gatherings that mean the <i>most</i> to you
Career Transitions	network strategically and connect with a career mentor
Economic Uncertainty	bolster your emergency fund, if possible, or invest in financial education
Negative Self-View	make a list of your strengths, accomplishments, and personal growth
Sleep Disturbances	engage in healthy sleep hygiene habits
Cultural & Diversity Pressures	foster inclusivity by embracing cultural differences and advocate for equity

B O N U S :

MY 3 FAVORITE STRATEGIES FOR OVERWHELM



DEEP BREATHING

When you're overwhelmed and overstimulated, your brain is taking in too much information at one time to be able to process it. Deep breathing activates the body's relaxation response, which then promotes a sense of calm and clarity in your brain.

Try this: inhale slowly through your nose, breathe in deeeeep from your belly, then exhale slowly through your mouth. Make sure you exhale completely!



GROUNDING: 54321

Grounding 54321 engages your senses by identifying your surroundings: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste. This brings your attention to the present moment, which slows down your brain and restores you to a more relaxed baseline. Another bonus of 54321: an anxious brain will recognize that nothing in your environment poses a danger, so the anxiety decreases as you relax!



BRAIN DUMP

A brain dump is a mental decluttering exercise where you jot down everything on your mind, from tasks to worries, onto paper. It organizes your thoughts and is a good way to ventilate everything your brain is trying to hold onto. When you write something down you're releasing the pressure from your brain to remember it. Kind of like how making a grocery list gives you relief from having to remember it all, a brain dump does the same thing - but with your worries!



Thank you!

I can't wait to see how implementing some of these strategies completely changes your experience of overwhelm. Like my clients, you'll go from feeling powerless to it, to knowing that you have more control over how you manage it, and doing so confidently!

Follow me on Instagram: [**@thekansascitytherapist**](#)
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Talk soon!

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