

Overwhelmed?



Many of us are getting ready to “celebrate” our one-year anniversary of telework, but unless *we’re* baking the cake and putting up streamers, there probably won’t be much fanfare. During the past year, personal and professional demands on teleworkers, especially those with children, have increased significantly. While continuing to juggle work and home responsibilities, they’ve adjusted to demands they weren’t prepared for (e.g. homeschooling). It’s no wonder many of us are feeling overwhelmed, it’s our body’s way of telling us that we are trying to manage too many things at once.

Sound familiar? If you are feeling overwhelmed these days, try these tips:

- **Take a Time out** – Know the signs your body uses to tell you that you are overwhelmed. When needed, put yourself in a *time out (physical or mental)*, i.e. take a few minutes to breathe deeply and acknowledge that you are experiencing stress and anxiety symptoms. Use this time to decompress, relax, meditate, self-soothe, and find your center.
- **Set Boundaries** – Don’t take on more than you can handle. Set parameters at work and home to keep you motivated and feeling good. Set specific work hours, take breaks throughout the day, eat lunch (preferably not at your desk), don’t bring work home with you, and turn cell phones off in the evenings. Don’t be afraid to say “no” when you need to.
- **Challenge Perfectionism** – Often we become overwhelmed when we push for perfect. Striving for our best is great, but pushing ourselves to be perfect is a recipe for disaster. This mentality usually makes tasks larger and more complex than necessary. Perfectionism is an unrealistic standard that can never be met, which creates stress and anxiety. Strive to be comfortable with your best efforts and let go of thoughts that you *should* be better or *should* do more. Embrace the idea that *‘okay is good enough’*.
- **Outsource or Delegate** – It is okay to ask for help from colleagues, family and friends. Letting go of certain things can be liberating and gives them the opportunity to support you. Identify things that can be pushed to a later date, I call this strategic procrastination.
- **Challenge Beliefs** – Thoughts like *‘I have to do it otherwise it won’t get done’*, *‘When I take leave something always goes wrong’*, or my favorite, *‘I always do everything’* can propel you toward feeling unsupported and struggling alone. Challenge those beliefs and replace them with more balanced and helpful thoughts like, *‘my team is capable of handling this’* or *‘it’s okay to pass this to someone else to complete.’*



Take inventory of how you are feeling. If you are feeling overwhelmed and anxious, your focus could be too far into the future. If you are feeling depressed you could be focusing on passed events, peace is in the present!