

WOMEN, MENTAL HEALTH, AND THE PRESSURE TO “HOLD IT ALL TOGETHER”

Many women carry overlapping responsibilities at work, at home, in caregiving, and in relationships. When the expectation is to keep functioning no matter what, serious distress can be hidden behind productivity, caretaking, or appearing “fine.”

What to notice or do:

- Notice your own warning signs: persistent exhaustion, hopelessness, irritability, numbness, isolation, disrupted sleep, or feeling unable to keep up.
- Name the load. Writing down responsibilities can help reveal when expectations have become unsustainable.
- Ask for specific support. “Can you handle dinner tonight?” or “Can you sit with me while I make this appointment?” is easier to act on than “I need help.”
- Protect connection. Regular contact with trusted people can reduce isolation, especially during periods of major change or loss.
- Seek professional support when distress persists, worsens, or includes thoughts of self-harm or suicide.



Keep in mind: You do not have to wait until you are unable to function before asking for help. Support can be preventive, not only a response to crisis.

If you are checking on someone else, avoid assuming that competence means they are coping well. A thoughtful “How are you doing underneath everything you’re managing?” can invite a more honest answer.