

IN FOCUS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - 8 MARCH 2022

Superwoman Syndrome

Are you someone who identify as a person who wants to do it all?

Many women put a lot of pressure on themselves: They want to perform at work, excel in their family life... in short they want to be superwomen. It's really hard to live up to such standards. Read on more to find out more about the Superwoman Syndrome.

WHAT IS THE SUPERWOMAN SYNDROME?

HAVING IT ALL, AT THE SAME TIME

The term "Superwoman Syndrome" was introduced by professional counsellor Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz (Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1984) to describe women who tend to neglect themselves and set extremely high expectations for various roles that they play in their lives, be it as a mother, spouse or as an employee. Women with Superwoman Syndrome come across as someone with the keen ability to "do it all".



WHO ARE MORE LIKELY TO GET THE SUPERWOMAN SYNDROME?

Research studies had found that certain personality traits such as perfectionism and high need for achievement (or Type A personality traits) are strongly associated with having Superwoman Syndrome (Sakulku, 2011). Having certain schemas, or mental blueprints, that reflects invulnerability and excessive sense of responsibility also contribute to the Superwoman Syndrome (Woods-Giscombé, 2010). In addition, living and working in highly competitive urban settings might worsen the Superwoman Syndrome for some people.



SIGNS AND DANGERS OF BEING A SUPERWOMAN

Some **signs** of the Superwoman Syndrome include:

- Inability to ask for help,
- having problems with sleep,
- inability to concentrate,
- difficulty relaxing even when "off the clock"
- attempting to take responsibility for everything and having difficulty in saying no.

Being a Superwoman can result in **emotional exhaustion** and ultimately **depression, anxiety and burnout**. The need to remain 'constantly on' for the Superwoman could lead to long-term physical health issues such as high blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases.



OVERCOMING SUPERWOMAN SYNDROME

Finding balance and adopting wellness habits are crucial to recover from being a Superwoman. Here are some practical tips:

- **Be comfortable sharing your feelings.** The ability to express and process one's feelings allows a person to cope with stress healthily.
- **Learn to say 'NO'.** It's your sacred right. Prioritize your obligations based on significance or impact for you rather than the external needs of the situation or someone else's desires.
- **Use your strength to say "yes".** Sometimes saying yes to support, a social outing that can feed your soul, or an opportunity that services your spirit is what is needed.
- **Having no-guilt downtime.** Take a break by getting a massage, reading a book, watching your favorite show, or taking a walk. Having enough time for rest is part of taking care of yourself and should not be seen as selfish.



REFERENCES:

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