

## Labour and Mental Load Inventory

Partner 1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Partner 2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Both of you should have the same name order for Partner 1 and Partner 2 to allow comparison.)

The aim of this inventory is to allow you and your partner to assess how effectively labour and mental load are shared in your relationship.







Labour is thought of in terms of time. The basic question with respect to labour is “How is the labour shared?” Mental load refers to something that is harder to quantify, but is just as real. Mental load refers to carrying the responsibility for ensuring a task is considered and taken care of. This inventory seeks to compare mental load as well as labour.

Examples are given below for three categories of the inventory that follows. The procedure is to use a coloured pen to show how you would assess each category. A line drawn further towards one partner indicates that partner does more of the work or carries more of the load.

In the example below, under “Paid Work” the coloured lines reflect a situation where both partners work an equal number of hours each week, but Partner 1 has a job that involves carrying very little responsibility. Partner 1 is able to complete their own tasks and forget about work at 5 p.m. each day. Partner 2 has a job that involves responsibility for the work of others and often leaves them thinking about their work outside of regular work hours.

The second example reflects a situation where Partner 1 both does the work of paying the bills and is the one who is responsible for thinking about whether bills are paid on time.

The third example is included because it may seem odd to include sex in this list. However, someone does need to do things like initiate sex and someone has to be responsible for thinking about whether your sex lives are working for you both and for initiating conversations about your sex life. The example below reflects a situation where both partners share in initiating, but Partner 1 is the one who it generally falls to to notice and do something about the fact that your shared sex lives aren’t working as well as they could.

	Share of Labour		Share of Mental Load	
	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 1	Partner 2
<b>Paid Work</b>				
<b>Financial</b>				
Paying bills, budgeting				
<b>Sex</b>				

There is really no way to put a numerical score on all of this. This inventory's main purpose is to get you talking. When you compare how you have each filled this out, what do you notice? Do you have very different understandings of how things actually are? Does it look like it works? Are there any opportunities to make changes? We are all different. Sometimes what is a big load to one person can be shifted to the other partner who might find that task easier to do or to carry.

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	Share of Labour		Share of Mental Load	
	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 1	Partner 2
<b>Paid Work</b>				
<b>Financial</b>				
Paying bills, budgeting				
Managing debts and investments				
<b>Home</b>				
Home repairs				
Dealing with contractors				
Dealing with landlord/superintendent				
Maintaining lawn, gardens and home exterior				
Snow removal				
Garbage and recycling				
Home decor/furniture				
Preparing meals				
Cleaning up from meals				
Planning menus/shopping list				
Grocery shopping				
Adult clothing shopping				
Laundry				
Housecleaning				
Family schedule/calendar				
<b>Children / Grandchildren</b>				
Baths, stories, bedtime				
Morning routine				
Ensuring they have the clothes they need				
Boundary setting and consequences				
School paperwork				
Liaising with teachers, daycare				
Being there when they need support and comfort				
Sports and leisure activities				
Homework support				
Medical appointments				
Drop offs/pick ups				
Assigning chores/ensuring completion				
<b>Transportation</b>				
Car repairs, snow tires, cleaning				
Car purchases				
Transit passes, bus and train tickets				

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	Share of Labour		Share of Mental Load	
	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 1	Partner 2
<b>Leisure</b>				
Making quality time happen for the two of you				
Organizing vacations				
Entertainment/social calendar				
<b>Extended Family</b>				
Christmas and birthday gifts				
Taking care of parents				
Dealing with extended family				
<b>Sex</b>				
Other categories relevant to your relationship:				