



# THE 10 MENTAL HEALTH PLAGUES



The 10 plagues in the story of Exodus signify the start of freedom. When we remember the plagues of Egypt at the Seder, we are remembering the miraculous things God did for us there. But many of us have things plaguing our lives, and as we spend Passover talking about the plagues in Egypt, we should talk as well about the mental health plagues of today. As you recite the traditional 10 plagues in your Haggadah, consider adding the following list:

## 1 Fear

Fear is a reaction we have to an immediate threat (AJP). Fear can activate our “fight, flight or freeze” response, which is how our body reacts to help us navigate the threat and stay safe. The body’s response to fear affects both our physical and mental health. With the steady increase in antisemitism over the past few years, we may be experiencing increased response to fear (ADL).



## 2 Self-Judgment

So many factors affect the way we live our lives, and the constant change of life’s pace can have an impact on our daily routines. Our productivity may change in moments of flux; we need to be kind to ourselves when that happens.

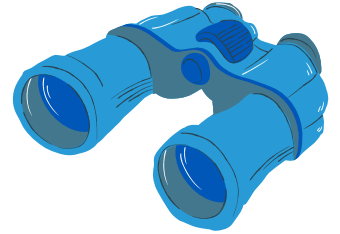




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## 3 Imposter Syndrome

Many of us fear being exposed as a “fraud.” It can be easy to compare ourselves to others and their perceived success, especially with the constant nature of social media. Remember that we all have moments of self-doubt about our abilities to get things done and our accomplishments — despite evidence of our success.



## 4 Burnout

It can be difficult to find balance in our lives. Burnout doesn't only occur in the workplace; it can happen to anyone going through periods of constant stress. Burnout can lead to an increased risk of physical health conditions and affect our behavior. We can create balance through setting boundaries, leaning on our social supports and engaging in mindfulness activities. It is OK to rest.



## 5 Substance Use

In 2022, 70.3 million people (24.9%) aged 12 or older in the United States used illicit drugs and 48.7 million people (17.3%) aged 12 or older had a substance use disorder (SAMHSA).



## 6 Trauma/Stressor-Related Symptoms

Many people are in the process of recovering from the various collective traumas we've experienced over the past few years. In 2023, a third of adults said they feel completely stressed out no matter what they do to manage their stress. This increase in long-term stress affects both physical and mental health. It requires a different set of skills to manage than temporary stressors, making it challenging to navigate (APA).





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## 7 Depression

Depression is a leading cause of disability worldwide. In 2022, 21 million adults in the United States experienced a major depressive episode, but only 61% of those suffering received treatment (NIMH).



## 8 Isolation/Loneliness

In May 2023, the U.S. surgeon general released a new advisory on the public health crisis of loneliness, isolation and lack of connection in the United States. Persistent loneliness can negatively affect physical and mental health, leading to increased rates of depression and anxiety (APA).



## 9 Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the most common mental health disorders in the United States. It affects more than 40 million adults aged 18 and older, or 19.1% of the population every year. Anxiety disorders affect 31.9% of adolescents (those between 13 and 18) in the United States (ADAA).



## 10 Suicidal Ideation

In 2021, an estimated 1.7 million adults attempted suicide (SAMHSA), and more than 48,000 died. In 2022 nearly 50,000 people died by suicide, about a 3% increase (CDC). Among people aged 10-14 and 25-34 in the United States, suicide is the second leading cause of death (NIMH).

