

Personalization

(Blaming yourself for things that are not your fault)

1. What It Is (Simple Definition)

Personalization is a thinking pattern where you **take responsibility for events you didn't cause**, or assume that everything is about you—even when it isn't.

You blame yourself automatically, even without evidence.

2. Common Signs

- Feeling guilty for things outside your control
- Assuming others' reactions are because of you
- Overthinking what you “did wrong”
- Taking responsibility for other people's emotions
- Feeling like you must fix everything

- - Apologizing too often
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 - Feeling at fault even when no one blames you
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3. Everyday Examples

- - A friend is quiet ☺ “I must have upset them.”
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 - A group project goes badly ☺ “It’s all my fault.”
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 - Someone doesn’t reply to your message ☺ “I must have said something wrong.”
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 - A family member is stressed ☺ “It’s because of me.”
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 - A random bad event happens ☺ “Maybe I caused this somehow.”
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4. Why It Happens

- Low self-esteem
- Childhood criticism or pressure
- Fear of conflict
- People-pleasing habits
- Over-responsibility
- Anxiety or perfectionism
- Desire to stay in control by blaming yourself

5. How It Affects You

- Unnecessary guilt
 - Stress and anxiety
 - Feeling responsible for everyone's problems
 - Difficulty setting boundaries
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Negative self-image
 - Always expecting yourself to be “perfect”
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6. What Helps

- **Check the facts:**

• “Is this really my responsibility?”

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Ask: “Would I blame someone else for this?”

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Identify what is in your control vs. not in your control

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Practice saying “This is not about me.”

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Stop excessive apologizing

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Challenge guilt-based thoughts

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Allow others to feel their own emotions

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Therapy (CBT helps reduce self-blame)

7. When to Seek Help

If personalization leads to:

- Constant guilt
- Overthinking everything
- Stress in relationships
- Feeling responsible for everyone's happiness
- Difficulty functioning or relaxing

A mental health professional can help shift these thinking patterns.