

**Unlearning the Weight:
A Second-Generation Mental Health &
Identity Healing Worksheet**

RAICES FLOURISH
YOUR JOURNEY, OUR SUPPORT

HELLO,

Before we begin, I wanted to share why I created this guide and the importance of it. I grew up in a Canadian city where there weren't many racialized people around me. I didn't have friends I could talk to about what it was like to be a child of immigrants, but I could see the difference. The big houses. The ease. The way their parents didn't worry about language barriers, or whether a foreign degree would be recognized. I remember translating documents, interpreting doctor's appointments, navigating systems too big for my small self. And then came the feeling of owing our parents, for their sacrifices, for all they endured, and for the hope that we might make life a little better for them.

Our experiences were, and are, different.

Our parents loved us and did everything they could. But that doesn't mean we didn't carry too much. And it doesn't make you ungrateful to feel tired, to want space, to crave something different.

This worksheet is for those of us who live in-between. Between cultures. Between expectations. Between who we are and who we've been told to be. My hope is that this guide inspires you to release what's expected of you and reconnect with who you truly are.

How it works

This is a reflective worksheet divided into six parts, each one designed to help you better understand your story, your roles, and ultimately, your voice.

The first two sections are free to access:

- In the first, we explore the family roles you may have carried from childhood.
- In the second, we unpack burnout, how it shows up, and why it might feel so familiar.

If these resonate, the full version goes deeper into healing: gently unraveling internalized beliefs, learning self-compassion, connecting with your needs, and helping you reclaim your voice on your own terms.

Take your time. There's no rush. You deserve the space to reflect and feel fully seen.

With care,

JESSICA BATRES

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PART 1: WHAT ARE YOU CARRYING?

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INTRO

This part of the guide is inspired by Narrative Therapy, a counselling approach that invites us to explore the stories we've internalized about ourselves. Often, these stories shape how we see the world, our worth, and our role in relationships. Narrative Therapy also helps us reconnect with our strengths, values, and the parts of ourselves that may have been overlooked.

In this section, we'll look at the roles you may have taken on growing up. In every family system, we often unconsciously adopt roles to keep things "stable" or to meet the unspoken expectations of others. Which of these feel familiar to you?

1. WHAT STORIES OR ROLES DID YOU GROW UP WITH?

Choose any that feel familiar:

- The responsible one
- The "successful" one
- The fixer or peacemaker
- The strong one who doesn't ask for help
- The one who can't mess up
- The bridge between cultures
- The good one, she/he doesn'tt cause problems
- Other: _____



PART 1: WHAT ARE YOU CARRYING?

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2. What parts of you helped you survive growing up?

Once you start to notice the roles you played, it's helpful to ask:

Why did I need to be that way?

Often, these roles weren't just habits – they were ways we adapted to feel safe, loved, or needed.

"A part of me learned to _____, so I could feel _____."

This can help you connect with the survival strategies you picked up – not to judge them, but to understand them with compassion.

A few examples

"A part of me learned to overachieve, so I could feel accepted."

"A part of me learned to stay quiet, so I could feel safe."

"A part of me learned to make people laugh, so I could feel wanted."

Take your time. There's no right or wrong answer, just your truth.

PART 2: GETTING CURIOUS ABOUT BURNOUT

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INTRO

The parts of us that helped us survive, being the responsible one, staying quiet, always helping others, often follow us into adulthood. But what happens when those survival strategies become our default way of being? When we keep playing roles that no longer serve us, it can leave us exhausted, disconnected, and overwhelmed. That's where burnout often begins, not just from doing too much, but from carrying too much that was never really ours to begin with.

I don't know about you, but I grew up with a single mother who was navigating life in a new country. Her teaching degree from Guatemala wasn't recognized in Canada, so she had to start over, this time, studying nursing while raising two kids on her own. There wasn't any space for rest. She was always moving, always doing. And so, I learned to help. To carry what I could.

We took on responsibilities too big for us, translating documents, calling the bank, going to doctor appointments for them to translate, and taking care of a younger sibling, all while you were still a kid. That was survival. We grew up in survival.

We learned that rest wasn't safe or allowed. It wasn't modeled. And maybe even now, part of us still believes that.

But here's the question: Is that still true today? Do we still need to live like that?

PART 2: GETTING CURIOUS ABOUT BURNOUT

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3. What are the warning signs you might be burning out or disconnected from yourself?

- You feel tired even after a full night's sleep
- You keep pushing through exhaustion
- You feel numb or disconnected from your emotions
- You often feel like you're living for others, not yourself
- You criticize yourself for "not doing enough"
- You struggle to rest without feeling guilty
- You feel anxious or on edge most of the time
- You try to please everyone, even when it costs you
- You take on too much and overextend yourself
- You feel unmotivated, even for things you care about
- You have trouble being present or staying grounded
- You don't always understand what's happening in your body
- You find it hard to set or stick to boundaries
- You notice tension in your relationships or at work
- You feel like everything is just too much

If you checked several of these, you're not broken, you're likely burned out. These signs aren't personal failures, they're signals. They're your body and nervous system saying, "I need care. I need space. I need something to change."



PART 2: GETTING CURIOUS ABOUT BURNOUT

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4. What Helps (A Small Practice for When You're Struggling)

One place to begin is by noticing how you speak to yourself when things feel hard. When you're overwhelmed, anxious, or burned out, does your inner voice sound like:

- “You should...”
- “Why can’t you just...”
- “Don’t mess this up...”
- “You always...”

These voices aren’t bad or broken, they’re old survival messages. Parts of you that learned to be hard on yourself to keep you safe, accepted, or in control. Maybe they were trying to protect you from failure, rejection, or disappointment.

The thing is, your body and nervous system don’t always know when the danger has passed. Sometimes, they stay stuck in survival mode, even if your current reality is different.

The good news is: you can begin to respond to these voices with curiosity and compassion, and gently remind them that you’re not in the same situation anymore.

On the next page, we’ll get to exercise it.

A Small Practice When You're Struggling

Try this

WRITE

One sentence that your inner voice says when you're struggling.

(Example: "You're being lazy, you should be doing more.")

REWRITE

It gently, as if you were speaking to a younger version of yourself.

(Example: "You're tired, and that's okay. Resting is productive, resting is allowed.")

NEED SOME ALTERNATIVES

"It's okay to make mistakes, I'm human."

"Mistakes are part of the learning process."

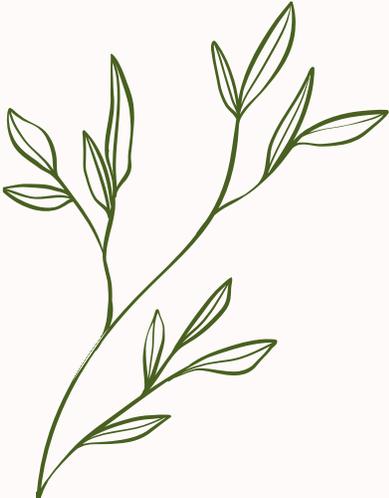
"Rest is productive."

"I am a human being, not a human doing."

"I don't have to earn my worth."

"I can go slow – that's still progress."





This small shift in self-talk won't solve everything, but it can soften your inner world. And that's a powerful place to start.



In the full version of the guide, we'll go deeper into nervous system care, boundaries, rest, and re-learning how to feel safe in your own life.



You don't have to do it alone.



About

Jessica Batres



Jessica Batres is a Registered Social Worker with years of experience supporting adults navigating anxiety, depression, identity exploration and life transitions, she brings a deeply personal, culturally attuned lens to her work. As the daughter of immigrant parents, Jessica knows firsthand what it's like to live between worlds, balancing cultural roots, racialized experiences, and the weight of family hopes.

Based in the Greater Toronto Area, Jessica is fluent in English, Spanish and French, and is committed to celebrating and working within the richness of multilingual, multicultural identities. When you're ready, she's here to walk alongside you.

RESOURCES



Raíces Flourish Resources

Culturally responsive and trauma informed counseling services for individuals and couples



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Blog Post related to in-between cultures



[Healing Hurts, But It Makes Us Stronger: A Therapist's Reflection](#)



[Latina Women, Marianismo, and the Pressure to Be Perfect](#)



[Healing as the Eldest Daughter of Immigrant Families: Letting Go Without Losing Our Roots](#)

Educational Content

I provide free educational content through blogs, social media content, self-guides and workshops.



[@raices.flourish.counseling](#)



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Podcast: Jessica Batres appearance



[When Rest Feels Like Betrayal: How Living Between Two Cultures Shapes First-Generation Mental Health](#)



[When You Had To Be The Parent: Emotional Healing for Adult Children](#)

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