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**WHEN TO SEEK
EXTRA HELP**

Reaching out is not a sign of weakness—it is a step toward healing.

Seeking extra help does not mean you have failed.
It means you are listening to what your body, mind, and spirit are asking for.

You deserve support.

Understanding the Difference Between Stress and Strain

Stress is a normal response to challenge. It often rises and falls with circumstances.

Strain occurs when stress becomes:

- Persistent rather than temporary
- Overwhelming rather than manageable
- Disruptive to daily life, relationships, or health

When strain replaces balance, your system is signaling that it needs more care than self-help alone can provide.

Signs It May Be Time to Reach Out

Consider seeking additional support if you notice any of the following lasting more than a few weeks:

Emotional Signs

- Constant anxiety, fear, or worry that feels hard to control
- Persistent sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger, or emotional numbness
- Guilt or self-blame that does not ease

Physical and Nervous System Signs

- Ongoing exhaustion or feeling “on edge”
- Trouble sleeping, frequent headaches, or stomach issues
- Panic attacks, shortness of breath, or heart racing
- Feeling disconnected from your body or surroundings

Daily Life and Relationship Changes

- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or completing tasks
- Withdrawing from people you care about
- Loss of interest in activities that once brought joy
- Increased conflict, isolation, or emotional shutdown

What “Extra Help” Can Look Like

Consider seeking additional support if you notice any of the following lasting more than a few weeks:

Professional Support

- Therapists, psychologists, or counselors
- Social workers or community mental health providers
- Primary care or medical professionals when stress affects the body

A culturally responsive provider can offer a safe space to explore identity, family expectations, migration stress, grief, and resilience.

Community and Faith-Based Support

- Spiritual leaders, pastors, or faith counselors
- Elders, mentors, or trusted community figures
- Support groups for grief, stress, caregivers, or diaspora experiences

Healing has always been communal in many cultures. You do not have to walk alone.

Crisis Support

If you are in immediate emotional distress or feel unsafe:

- Reach out to local crisis lines or emergency services
- Contact a trusted person and let them know you need support
- Seek urgent mental health care when necessary

Your life and wellbeing matter.

Addressing Common Barriers to Asking for Help

Many in the diaspora hesitate to seek support because of:

- Cultural expectations to “be strong”
- Fear of being judged or misunderstood
- Belief that others have it worse
- Concerns about cost, access, or stigma

Strength does not mean suffering in silence.

Caring for your mental health is an act of dignity, responsibility, and self-respect.

You are allowed to need support even when others rely on you.

Preparing to Ask for Help

If reaching out feels difficult, you might begin with:

- Writing down what you have been experiencing
- Identifying one person you trust
- Saying simply: *“I’m not okay, and I could use some support.”*

You do not have to explain everything at once. Help can begin with a single conversation.

Reflection Prompt

How will I know when I need extra support?

Write down:

One sign that tells you stress is becoming too much:

One person or professional you could reach out to:

One barrier you want to release in order to care for yourself:

You have carried much with courage, compassion, and resilience.
But you were never meant to carry everything alone.

Seeking extra help is not a failure—it is an act of wisdom.
It protects your health, your relationships, and your future.

Your mind matters.
Your wellbeing matters.