

THE

SILENT

When Signs
Speak Louder
Than Words

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The Silent Six

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When our protective coping mechanisms kick in, these patterns can hide our true emotions, making our true feelings hard to recognize. These are six subtle ways that the Five Signs silently sneak into our behaviors and can be used as part of an individual's baseline to indicate that change or help is needed.



FILTERING

Filtering occurs when individuals downplay or ignore their true feelings, often saying they are fine when they are actually experiencing emotional distress. This might happen because they fear burdening others with their emotions, or they worry about the stigma associated with mental health issues. As a result, they choose to conceal their true feelings by claiming they are 'fine,' making it easier to avoid confronting or discussing their emotional state.



PEOPLE PLEASING

People pleasing is a behavior where individuals consistently put others' needs before their own to avoid disappointing them. This often involves overextending themselves by taking on too many responsibilities or failing to say 'no.' While this may temporarily create a sense of worth, it can lead to emotional burdens, including increased anxiety, stress, and depression.



GLOSSING

Glossing, or toxic positivity, involves excessively using optimism to dismiss real emotional struggles, often by using humor or false reassurances to avoid acknowledging difficult feelings. While humor can be a healthy coping mechanism, when misused, it can mask deeper issues and hurt others. Toxic positivity undermines genuine empathy and minimizes negative emotions, which can hinder emotional healing and growth.



FIXATING

Fixating refers to an excessive focus on certain behaviors or activities, such as deep engagement in hobbies, shopping, social media use, substance overindulgence, or unhealthy eating as a means to avoid dealing with underlying issues. This behavior often serves as an escape from reality or a way to gain control when emotions feel overwhelming. While it provides temporary relief, fixating can prevent addressing and resolving the real emotional challenges at hand.



GHOSTING

Ghosting is the act of suddenly and without warning withdrawing from a relationship, situation, or friendship. It is typically used as a means to avoid emotional discomfort, confrontation, or responsibilities, differing from the establishment of healthy boundaries, which involves clear communication. Ghosting can leave unresolved issues and impact both parties emotionally.



ROTTING

Rotting refers to the physical manifestation of mental health issues, characterized by symptoms like fatigue, exhaustion, and malaise. This can lead to 'bed rotting,' where individuals spend excessive time in bed, avoiding daily activities and responsibilities. While some relaxation is beneficial, prolonged periods of bed rotting can harm both mental and physical health.

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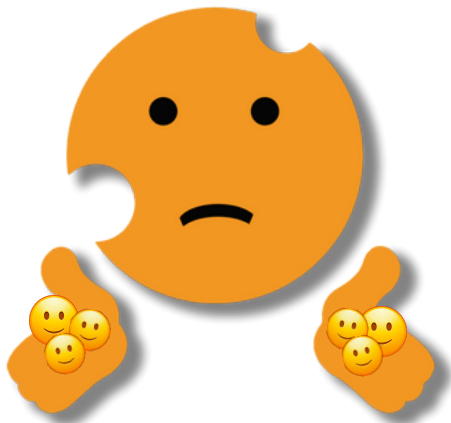
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EXAMPLES

- **After a Personal Loss:** A person who has recently lost a loved one might tell friends and family they are "doing okay" and managing their grief well, even when they are deeply hurting, to avoid worrying others or having to delve deeper into their feelings of sorrow.
- **In Romantic Relationships:** A partner might hide their true feelings of unhappiness or dissatisfaction in the relationship, repeatedly affirming that everything is "fine", to avoid conflict or the painful discussions that might lead to a breakup.
- **Among Adolescents:** A teenager might insist they're "fine" and dismiss their feelings of depression or anxiety to their parents or teachers because they fear being misunderstood, judged, or not taken seriously.

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EXAMPLES

- **Difficulty Saying "No":** Always agreeing to tasks or commitments, even when already overextended.
- **Seeking Validation:** Constant need for approval or affirmation from others.
- **Avoiding Conflict:** Going out of the way to avoid any form of disagreement or confrontation.
- **Feeling Responsible for Others' Happiness:** Believing that it's one's duty to ensure everyone else is content, even at personal expense.
- **Over commitment:** Regularly finding oneself overbooked or stretched too thin.
- **Settling:** allowing others to make decisions, agreeing, or giving in.

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EXAMPLES

- **Phrases used:** Dismissing emotions with platitudes like "it could be worse"; Minimizing others' experiences with "feel good" quotes; Dismissing concerns with phrases like "it is what it is" or "fake it till you make it"
- **In action to ourselves:** Suppressing emotions to "just get on with it"; Feeling guilty about negative emotions; Hiding or masking true feelings
- **In action to others:** Providing unsolicited advice instead of validating feelings; Shaming others for not being positive

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EXAMPLES

- **Dopamine Binging:** Spending excessive hours on social media platforms like TikTok “doom scrolling” to avoid dealing with personal issues or negative emotions.
- **Retail Therapy:** Compulsively shopping to cope with stress or emotional discomfort, often leading to financial strain.
- **Substance Overindulgence:** Using alcohol or drugs as a means to escape reality, leading to potential dependency.
- **Food as Comfort:** Turning to comfort eating or overindulging in unhealthy foods as a way to soothe emotional distress.

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EXAMPLES

- **Sudden Silence:** Abrupt cessation of communication without explanation.
- **Unanswered Messages:** Ignoring calls, texts, or other forms of communication.
- **Avoidance of Plans:** Canceling plans last minute or making excuses to avoid meeting in person.
- **Disappearing from Social Media:** Deleting or blocking the person from social media platforms.

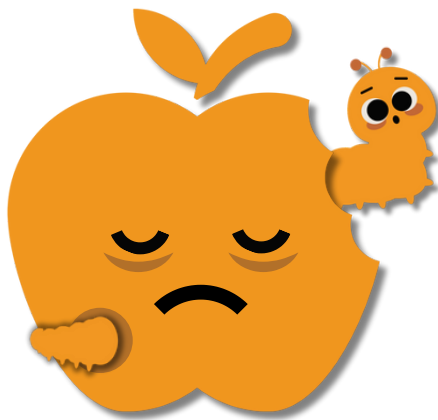
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EXAMPLES

- **Fatigue and Exhaustion:** Feeling constantly tired or lacking energy.
- **Under the Weather:** Feeling generally unwell, like fighting off a cold.
- **Body Aches:** Experiencing muscle aches and pains without apparent physical cause.
- **Isolation:** Preferring solitude and spending excessive time alone.