

Additional Resources

Boundaries and Self-Care

Signs of Unhealthy Boundaries

Service Provider

- Giving intimate information about self
- Believing that only you can "save" this person(s)
- Believing that the "system" doesn't understand
- Believing that colleagues don't understand when you discuss/defend your behavior
- Lending money
- Taking sides in an argument between members
- Considering yourself "part of the family"
- Experiencing stress induced illnesses such as asthma, angina, back pain, migraines, etc.

Member

- Tells all or talks at an intimate level at first meeting
- Falls in love with an acquaintance
- Takes as much as possible regardless of need
- Gives as much as he/she can give for the sake of giving
- Believes others should anticipate his/her and fulfill their needs
- Falls apart so someone will take care of them
- Goes against personal values or rights to please others
- Allows people to take advantage of him/her

Ways to Say “No”

- **‘No’ as a complete sentence:** “No, thank you” or “No, thank you. I won’t be able to.” (Say it, don’t apologize)
- **Vague but firm:** “Thank you for asking me, but that is not going to work for me.”
- **Referral/Delegation:** “I won’t be able to, but why don’t you ask Joe? I bet he’ll be able to.”
- **Last Minute Boundary:** “I can’t add anything onto my calendar this month, but the next time you’re planning to go _____, let me know as soon as you can because I would love to go with you.”
- **It’s Not Personal:** “Thank you for thinking of me, but I am not doing any audits this quarter while I am focusing on starting my new project.”
- **Showing Gratitude:** I’m so touched that you thought of me and I really appreciate your enthusiasm and support. I’m sorry I won’t be able to help out at this time.”
- **It’s Not Whether, But When:** “I would like to, but I am unavailable until August. Could you ask me again closer to that time?” or “None of those dates work for me, but I would love to see you. Send me some more dates.”
- **Gracious:** “I truly appreciate your asking, but my time is already committed.”
- **Word of Mouth Is the Best Recommendation:** “I won’t be able to, but let me recommend someone to you who would be able to help you.”
- **Someone Else Asked First/Family:** “I already told my partner/therapist/coach/etc. that I would not be taking on more at this time. I am working to create a more balanced life.” or “That is the day of my son’s dance recital, and I never miss those.”
- **Know Thyself:** “No. But here is what I can do...” (Then limit the commitment to what works for you.)
- **Time To Assess:** “Let me think about it and I will get back to you.”
- **Give Others a Chance:** “You know, I feel like the accounting department is always organizing the office fundraisers/parties. Let’s ask the Marketing Department to help this year.”

Self-Care First-Aid Kit

SAMSHA describes burnout as a debilitating psychological condition and physical exhaustion brought about by unrelieved work stress. When stress increases, we especially need to attend to our emotional, physical and spiritual needs and practice nourishing, healthy habits. However, for many of us, that's exactly when our self-care declines. We neglect our needs and get trapped in a web of overwhelm. When you're facing a difficult situation or any kind, it helps to know exactly *what* and *who* will bring you the most comfort and let you express your feelings safely and in a healthy way.

To create your Self-Care First-Aid Kit, answer the following questions:

1. What responsibilities can I delegate at home and work so I can attend to my needs and feeling my feelings?
2. Who can I turn to for support and comfort?
3. Who should I avoid?
4. What does my body need to feel nourished, healthy and strong?
5. What unhealthy or unhelpful strategies or activities do I need to avoid?
6. If I have a spiritual belief, what practice connects me to God or another higher power I believe in?
7. What will bring me comfort right now?
8. How can I express my feelings in a healthy way?
9. What object can I use as a cue to remind me to relax and be in the present moment?
10. What are healthy distractions for me when I need to take breaks during the day?
11. How can I let go of the work day before I transition into home?
12. What are my trauma inputs?

TIP:

Jot down your answers, and keep it somewhere visible (and handy). This way, the next time stress strikes, you don't need to think about how you'll support your needs and practice self-care. You'll already have a thoughtful, effective plan all written down.