

Setting Healthy Boundaries



Putting yourself first can often feel impossible. But if we constantly cater to the demands of others, it can cause us to feel unhappy, resentful, insecure, and mentally exhausted. Learning how to set, and stick to, healthy boundaries is a valuable skill which not only protects your own mental health, but also enriches relationships in the long term. Barriers to setting healthy boundaries may include not wanting to disappoint others, or be viewed as a failure if we can't take on everything we think is expected of us.

However, there are a few things that you can do to communicate your boundaries in a way that is firm, yet respectful.

- **Take time to collect your thoughts.** Saying “yes” to things can sometimes occur when we don't take the time to think about whether we have the bandwidth to truly accommodate the request. Listen to what is being asked of you and take stock of your mental and emotional reserve to make a more informed decision on what you can reasonably help with.
- **Never assume that you know what someone else is thinking or feeling.** Saying “yes” to a request based on the assumption that you might hurt someone else's feelings if you say “no”, can result in feelings of anger and resentment over time. Instead of guessing how your decision might affect someone, ask them.
- **Follow through on what you say.** Setting boundaries, but not following through, can seemingly give the other person permission to disregard them. Don't make exceptions to your boundaries lightly, as you may find yourself compromising on things that actually aren't acceptable to you.
- **Know when it's time to move on.** If you notice that despite clearly communicating your boundaries, someone continues to ask you to compromise your guardrails, it is important to re-evaluate whether that is a relationship you are able to maintain.