

How to Set Boundaries - Saying No

1. Identify your boundaries

If you're not clear where your boundaries are, start with our [Visualizing Your Boundaries](#) worksheet. This will help you identify people and situations that make you uncomfortable and where you need to practice boundary setting skills.

2. Identify your personal values

Boundaries are based on your unique personal values, in other words, knowing what is most important to you. If you are not clear about your personal priorities, try our [Personal Values](#) worksheet. List the life domains that are most important to you.

3. Practice saying no

Everyone has the right to refuse or decline to do something. You do not owe any kind of explanation if questioned. However, saying no is difficult for those of us who want to keep others happy or who worry about what others will think of us.

Saying no is a key assertiveness skill and essential for setting healthy boundaries.

Try practicing these ways of saying no that are confident and respectful. You can roleplay these with a therapist or counselor first, or use them the next time you feel uncomfortable and need to set limits—either in person, by email or text message.

- “I’m not comfortable with this.”
- “I’d rather not....”
- “Please do not....”
- “I can’t do that for you.”
- “This doesn’t work for me.”
- “I’ve decided not to...”
- “This is not acceptable.”
- “I’m drawing the line at...”
- “I don’t want to do that.”

4. Reflect on how this made you feel

When we’re not used to setting boundaries with certain people or in specific situations, we might feel guilty, anxious, or even ashamed at first. This discomfort is to be expected when we are making changes to our behavior. Try leaning into any uncomfortable feelings and accepting them just as they are.

Try our [Radical Acceptance Calming Mantras](#) worksheet for extra help.