

# Healthy holiday boundaries, the best gift you can give yourself

Holidays can be a happy time; however, seasonal stress can affect us all. Readyng ourselves to cope with holiday stress requires a mindset shift. One way to reduce stress so you can better enjoy the holidays is to set healthy boundaries.

A boundary is a rule or line you put in place to protect your mental health and wellbeing. You can prepare yourself for the holidays by thinking about how to respond to questions and topics that may come up.

## How to develop healthy boundaries

- Do not prioritize other people's comfort over your own. There is no shame in asking people to acknowledge your feelings and needs.
- Be honest and stand up for yourself. It's the most truthful and authentic way to interact with others.
- Remember you can control how you handle things but not how people react. Some people may be troubled by your words—their reaction is theirs and not yours to take on.
- Prepare for scenarios that require thoughtful responses, such as hosting or attending events, questions about your relationships or body, political discussions, etc.
- Empower yourself and your choices. It is okay to arrive late, leave early, skip an event or drive your own car.

Setting and maintaining boundaries takes practice and patience. You may need to explain your position a few times with certain people. If someone repeatedly violates your boundaries, remember you can ask people to change their behavior, but you can't force them to change. You have the option to limit your interactions or reduce contact with that person if you find it necessary.

Choosing how to deal with people and activities that drain your energy creates space for activities that bring you joy.

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