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HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES?

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Caring for yourself is one of the basics of mental health and maintaining a balance in relationships. An important part is setting and consistently defending one's boundaries in contacts with others.

What are boundaries anyway?

There are two categories of boundaries:

- Physical – these are the most visible and easy to identify. They can include, for example, a sense of personal space, privacy, or sexual orientation. We express them through clothing, tolerance (e.g. to noise, scents), and body language. An example of their violation may be when the other person is too close to us, which makes us feel uncomfortable.
- Emotional – these define the need for emotional space between us and other people. They protect us against getting hurt, being manipulated or used. An example of violating these boundaries is when we sacrifice our own goals to please others.

Sometimes you can also have other types of boundaries, such as:

- material - they include personal belongings, things that belong to us,
- time - meaning respecting one's own and other people's time,
- intellectual - these concern thoughts and ideas,
- sexual - when they are not classified as physical.

How to set boundaries?

First of all, it is important to realize that setting boundaries has nothing to do with selfishness in the negative sense of the word. It is about being aware of your own needs and seeking to satisfy them **without hurting others**.

What words show that we respect our own boundaries?

- „No”
- „Please don't do this in front of me”
- „No, thank you”
- „Please stop”
- „I will not tolerate this”
- „I don't feel OK/good/comfortable with this”
- „I don't want to talk about it right now”
- „I need time to think about it”
- „I will not talk about it again”
- „We can come back to this some other time”

You don't have to apologize for such words. However, remember that setting boundaries is not about who is right at any given moment, but about making it clear to yourself and others what you need in order to feel good. And here it is important to respect the needs of other people.



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„The only people who will get angry with you when you start setting boundaries are those who benefit from the fact that you have no boundaries.”

- Louise Hay

SELF-CARE

Self-care can be expressed in a variety of ways. It is important not to forget about it when dealing with our daily challenges.

Try gradually introducing the following self-care practices:

1. If you feel bad about something, don't do it.
2. Say exactly what you think and feel.
It is important not only what, but also how you say things.
3. Don't do something just to please others.
4. Never speak or think badly of yourself.
5. Sometimes let go of things for yourself/others.
6. Don't be afraid to say no.
7. Don't be afraid to say yes.
8. Be good to yourself.
9. Let go of what you cannot control.
10. Stay away from drama and negativity.

Taking care of yourself is also about small everyday things like eating healthy, exercising, and remembering to rest. Some days the most productive thing we can do is rest. However, if you are unable to fully relax and your head is full of thoughts (about all the things you have to do, for example), try the following *mindfulness* exercise.

The five senses method

Take a deep breath and try to find:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell,
- 1 thing you can taste.

This exercise will allow you to be „here and now”, in a given moment and place. Mindfulness is a great way to show self-care. It involves observing what is happening around us without judging whether it is good or bad. Mindfulness is the recognition and acceptance of all emotions, both pleasant and unpleasant.

Benefits of mindfulness include:

- stress reduction,
- better self-understanding,
- concentration, focus,
- reducing the number of intrusive thoughts,
- limiting negative emotions,
- and many more.

We can practice self-care in different ways. Mindfulness will work for some people, while others will benefit from finding time to exercise regularly. Self-care is also the ability to set and maintain your own boundaries, staying in touch with people close to us, and ensuring a healthy work-life balance.

In order to be able to care for your loved ones and be productive at work, you must start with self-care. Remember that this is not selfishness. You can take care of your own needs and respect the needs of others at the same time. Marshall R. Rosenberg wrote about this in his great book “Non-violent communication”, which we highly recommend.

*Don't wait, call now! If you feel you need help with setting boundaries, contact us. **We are here to support You!***