Balancing Boundaries: Identifying and Implementing Internal and External Limits

What are Boundaries?

Boundaries are the unseen lines that help us decide what we're okay with and how we expect others to act toward us. They can be about our personal space, our feelings, our energy, our thoughts, and our stuff. Boundaries can help us stay mentally healthy by shielding us from stress and helping us to respect our individual rights. They can also help us feel safe physically.

Types of Boundaries

Physical Boundaries are related to personal space and touch.

Emotional Boundaries protect your feelings and stop you from shouldering others' emotional burdens.

Energetic Boundaries are about protecting your energy from others. If you often feel drained or overwhelmed by others or the vibes of a place, setting an energetic boundary can help.

Mental Boundaries relate to your thoughts, values, and opinions and your right to have them.

Material Boundaries are about your personal belongings and money.

Time Boundaries are about how you spend your time.

Body Boundaries are about your comfort level and consent concerning touch, intimacy, and sexual activities.

Digital Boundaries are about your online interactions, like privacy settings, the time spent online, and response times to messages.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Why are Boundaries Hard?

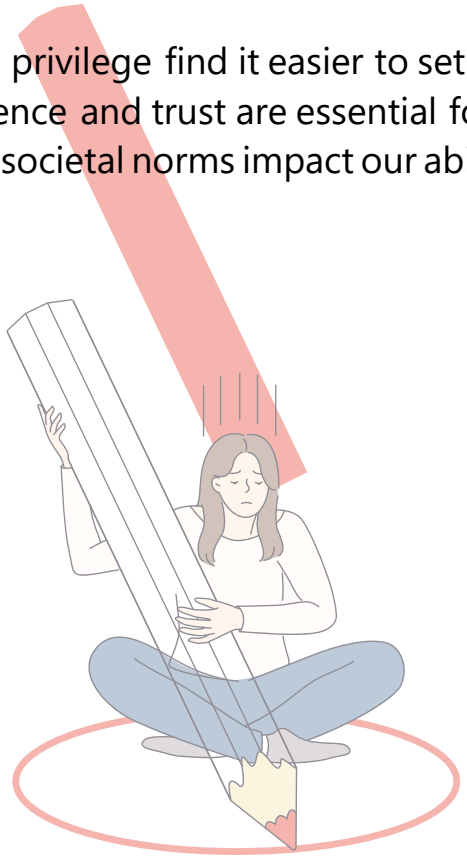
Challenges ADHD Women Face with Boundaries

Why Are Boundaries Hard?

Neurodivergent women aren't taught it's okay to assert boundaries. Understanding your boundaries and learning about your rights can reduce stress, improve executive functioning, and enhance relationships. Societal and cultural influences can further complicate boundary setting.

Power and Privilege in Boundary Setting

Some people with more privilege find it easier to set boundaries and have them respected. Confidence and trust are essential for setting boundaries, as is understanding how societal norms impact our ability to assert them.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

The Two Kinds of Boundaries

Boundaries can be divided into two main types:

Internal boundaries: These are the limits you set with yourself.

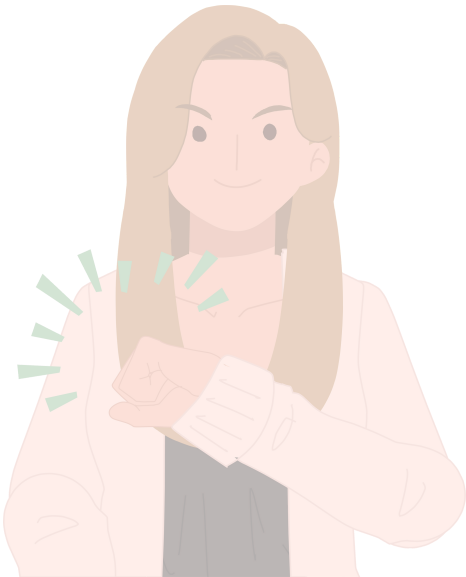
External boundaries: These are the limits you set with others.

When setting boundaries with yourself, we use the Flourish model's pillars to help guide the process. Internal boundaries often focus on personal limits you want to manage or control.

Concepts like motivation, willpower, and focus might not work the same way they do for neurotypical people and can cause you shame.

This means you'll need strategies tailored specifically to your needs. We'll share some ideas here and expand on them in future lessons.

Setting personal boundaries is a unique journey that takes time and practice. Be kind to yourself as you figure out what works best for you, and remember to align your boundaries with your values and goals.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Internal Boundaries

Personal boundaries are closely tied to self-care. Examples of self-boundaries include:

- ▶ Setting a consistent bedtime.
- ▶ Limiting work hours to maintain work-life balance.
- ▶ Managing social media usage.
- ▶ Choosing eating habits that feel healthy for you.
- ▶ Scheduling regular exercise.
- ▶ Carving out downtime for relaxation and hobbies.

Self-boundaries are essentially a form of self-care, which is why they can feel so difficult—true self-care isn't easy!

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Knowing When You Need Boundaries

Physical Boundaries: Pay attention to your comfort level when people are in your personal space or touching you. If you feel uneasy or unsafe, it's a sign to set or reinforce a boundary.

Emotional Boundaries: If you find yourself overly invested in someone else's problems or feel like your emotions are not respected, it may be time to establish an emotional boundary.

Energetic Boundaries: If you often feel drained or overwhelmed by others, or the vibes of a place, you might need to establish energetic boundaries to protect your energy.

Mental Boundaries: If you find your opinions are consistently dismissed or belittled, it's a sign that your mental boundaries need reinforcement.

Material Boundaries: If people often borrow your belongings without asking or assume you'll always cover the bill, you may need to clarify your material boundaries.

Time Boundaries: Feeling consistently over-committed or like your time isn't respected indicates the need for clearer time boundaries.

Body Boundaries: Pay attention to your comfort level regarding touch, intimacy, and sexual activities. If you ever feel pressured or uncomfortable, it's crucial to establish clear body boundaries.

Digital Boundaries: If you find your time online overwhelming or invasive, it could indicate the need for digital boundaries concerning privacy settings, time spent online, and response times to messages.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

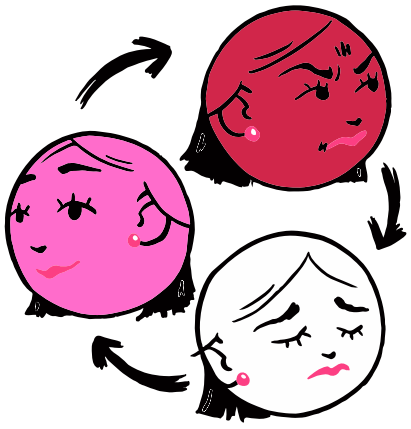
Using Your Emotional Cues as Boundary Signals

Often, your emotions might indicate you need to set a boundary.

Here are some emotions that might be pointing to the sign that you need to set internal or external boundaries.

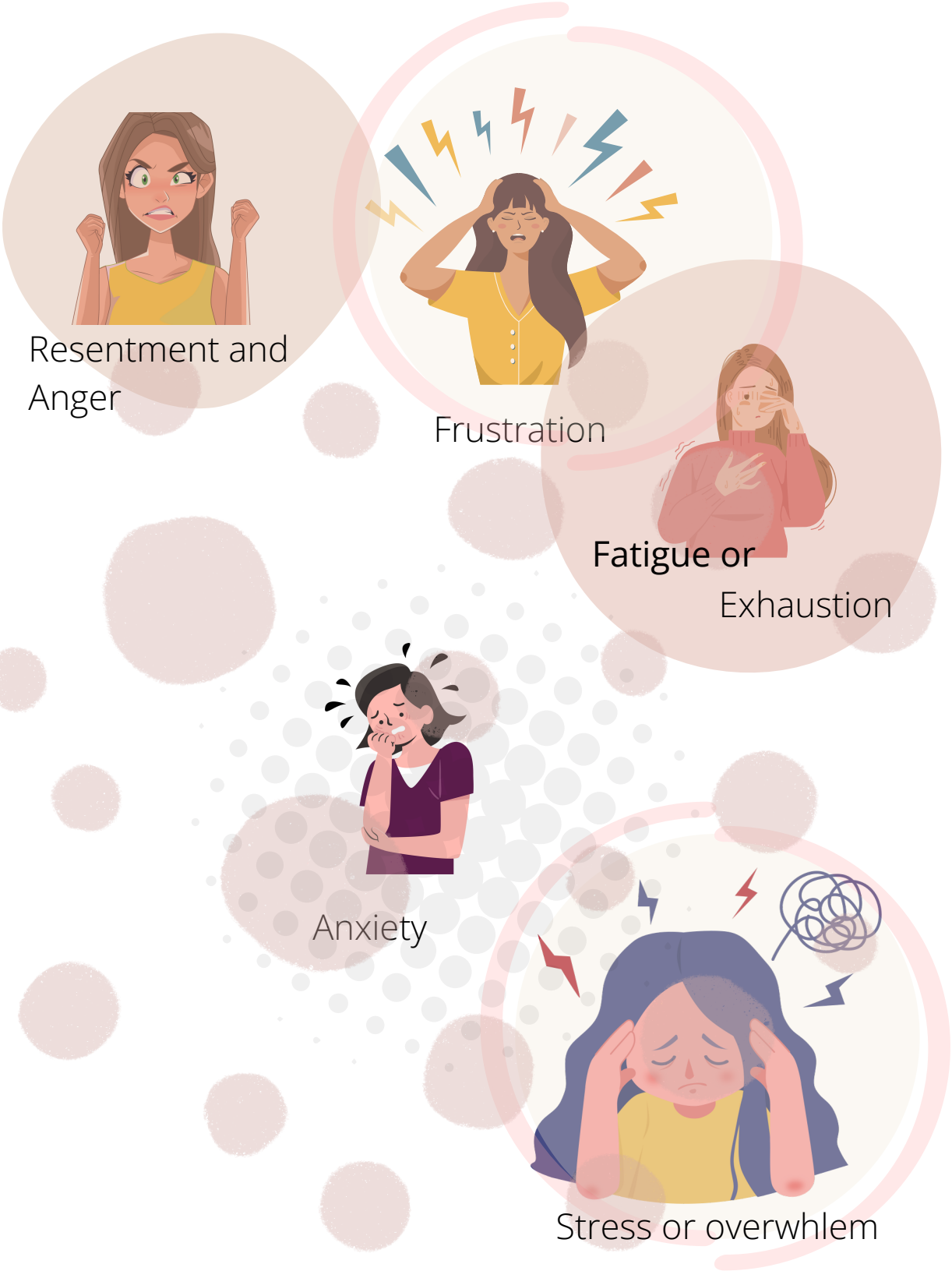
1. Stress and Overwhelm: Frequent feelings of stress or being overwhelmed can indicate that you're overextending yourself to accommodate other's needs, suggesting a need for better boundaries.

2. Emotional Exhaustion: If you often find yourself drained by other's emotions or problems, setting emotional boundaries can help conserve your emotional energy.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Emotions that Indicate You Need a Boundary



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Using Your Emotional Cues as Boundary Signals

3. Resentment and Anger: These feelings often surface when you perceive your boundaries are being violated, indicating the need for a more straightforward or more assertive boundary setting.

4. Frustration: If you often feel frustrated due to infringements on your time, space, or resources, this could signal that your boundaries need strengthening.

5. Fatigue: Persistent fatigue might suggest you're neglecting your own rest and self-care to meet others' expectations, hinting at a need for self-care boundaries.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Reflection:



Do any of these signs resonate with you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you felt confident and like there were no barriers to setting a boundary, what boundaries would you set to deal with these issues?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Would they be internal (with yourself) or external (with others)?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
How might you address these issues by setting or reinforcing boundaries?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Ineffective Ways to Set Self Boundaries

❌**Shame or Guilt:**
These emotions often backfire, leading to overwhelm, avoidance, procrastination, and feelings of discouragement.

❌**Criticism and Self-Judgment:**
Beating yourself up only triggers shame and blocks progress.

❌**Willpower:**
Willpower is inconsistent and unreliable, whether you're neurotypical or neurodivergent.

❌**Motivation:**Like willpower, it's unpredictable and unsustainable for managing boundaries.

❌**To-Do Lists, Reminders, and Planners:**While they have their place, these tools often don't work as intended for ADHDers. Using them to manage boundaries can lead to frustration.

❌**Unrealistic Expectations:**
Setting overly strict or ambitious boundaries can feel overwhelming, discouraging, and set you up for failure, often triggering Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD).

The key is to approach boundaries in a way that's compassionate, flexible, and tailored to your needs as an ADHDer.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

CHECKLIST

Reflect on your personal boundaries and check the areas where you struggle:

- [ ] **Bedtime**: Do you need to have one?
- [ ] **Work Life Balance:** Are you working too much?
- [ ] **Social Media Usage**: Too much time making you feel bad?
- [ ] **Healthy Eating Habits:** Are you feeding yourself enough? Are you
- [ ] **Moving :** Are you moving your body ? :
- [ ] **Relaxation:** Making enough time for special interests and downtime?
- [ ] _____
- _____
- _____

WHAT YOU TRIED THAT DOESN'T WORK

Reflect on the strategies you've tried to set personal boundaries and check the ones that have proven ineffective:

- [ ] Set big goals to be more disciplined and failed
- [ ] Shamed and guilted myself
- [ ] Tried to just get motivated
- [ ] Criticized myself
- [ ] Tried to have willpower with myself
- [ ] _____
- [ ] _____

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

What Will Help in Setting Personal Boundaries?

ADHD women face unique challenges in setting and maintaining personal boundaries due to traits like impulsivity and sensitivity. Cultivating self-compassion and prioritizing self-care are key to overcoming these difficulties.

1. Cultivating Self-Compassion

Acknowledge Your Challenges: Recognize that boundary-setting may be harder for you due to ADHD traits. This understanding is the foundation of self-kindness.

Externalize Goals and Priorities and Language: Use tools like sticky notes or reminders to clarify your focus and support working memory. Externalizing your priorities helps you stick to your boundaries.

Align Boundaries with Values and Needs: Ensure your boundaries reflect what truly matters to you. This alignment makes them easier to maintain, even during difficult moments.

Stay Flexible: Allow room for adjustment as life evolves. A flexible mindset prevents self-criticism and promotes growth.

Embrace Imperfection: Mistakes are a normal part of learning. Treat yourself with compassion, fostering resilience and progress.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

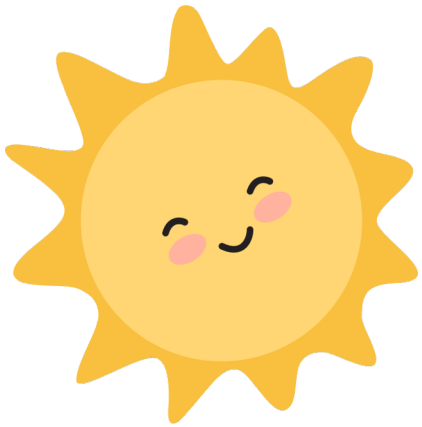
What Will Help in Setting Personal Boundaries?

2. Prioritizing Self-Care

Commit to Your Well-Being: Actively care for your physical, emotional, and mental health to affirm your self-worth.

Personalize Your Approach: Develop self-care routines that work for you, even if they differ from societal expectations or your upbringing.

By integrating self-compassion and self-care into your daily routine, you can navigate the challenges of ADHD with greater ease and experience a more balanced, fulfilling life.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

ACTION

BRAINSTORMING

WHAT INTERNAL BOUNDARY MIGHT I WORK ON WITH MYSELF?

MY GOAL:

NEW STRATEGIES TO TRY

REMINDING MYSELF I DESERVE SELF CARE	
PRACTICING SELF COMPASSION	
CONNECTING WITH THE VALUE BEHIND THE THING I'M DOING	
EXTERNALIZE	

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

ACTION

BRAINSTORMING

WHAT BOUNDARY MIGHT I WORK ON WITH MYSELF?

MY GOAL:

Set a bed time that's a little more reasonable 12 instead of 2 am

NEW STRATEGIES TO TRY	Self Compassion, values, leaving notes, self talk
REMINDING MYSELF I DESERVE SELF CARE	You deserve to be loved and caring for your sleep is an act of love
PRACTICING SELF COMPASSION	How? I will practice Self-soothing touch when I realize I am self-critical. I like putting my hand on my heart and remembering to say kind words" I'm doing the best I can"
CONNECTING WITH THE VALUE BEHIND THE THING I'M DOING	Better sleep helps me show up better as a mother, which is one of my values,
EXTERNALIZE	I am going to write reminders around the house, and also will take out the electronics to make it easy, as well as write down my values or put a picture of the bed time and clock on my nightstand to help,

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Strategy: Make the Easy Hard and the Hard Easy

This phrase encapsulates a crucial strategy in setting effective boundaries with yourself. The idea is to make it harder to engage in behaviors that aren't serving you by adding (friction) and easier to engage in behaviors that are beneficial by reducing friction.

For example, if you're trying to limit your social media use, make it harder to mindlessly scroll by removing the apps from your phone or logging out after each use. On the other hand, if you're trying to exercise more, make it easier by setting out your workout clothes the night before, or choosing exercises that you genuinely enjoy.

Another example might be if you're striving to eat healthier. You could make it harder to indulge in unhealthy snacks by not keeping them at home (make the easy hard) and make it easier to eat healthily by having fresh fruits and vegetables readily available (make the hard easy).

Remember that the journey towards setting and maintaining personal boundaries is unique and may involve some trial and error. It's essential to approach this process with self-compassion and recognize the importance of aligning these boundaries with your personal values and goals.





© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Setting Internal Boundaries

Many women with ADHD struggle with technology use, especially when it comes to avoiding distractions. The "make the easy hard and the hard easy" formula can be an effective strategy for setting internal boundaries. Here's how it works, using smartphone use as an example.

1. **Manage Distractions**
Make the Easy Hard:

Physically place your smartphone in another room, a drawer, or somewhere out of reach while working.

This creates a physical barrier, making impulsive checking less convenient.

Make the Hard Easy:
Designate a workspace that is solely for work and free of unrelated items.
This reduces distractions and makes focusing on your tasks more natural.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

2. Avoid Multitasking

Make the Easy Hard:

Use single-application mode or full-screen mode on your computer to block easy tab-switching.
This removes the temptation to juggle multiple tasks at once.

Make the Hard Easy:

Use physical tools like a notepad or planner for task management instead of digital ones, which can lead to distractions.
Having a clear, non-digital plan can make it easier to focus on one task at a time .

This strategy is adaptable to various goals, even if technology use isn't a specific issue for you. By intentionally making distractions less accessible and focus more natural, you're building self-supportive internal boundaries in a way that aligns with how your brain works.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Setting Internal Boundaries

3. Control Working Hours: Set a firm rule to turn off your computer at a certain hour, physically making it harder to keep working.

4. Regain Attention: Notifications easily capture our attention. Disable them on your devices, creating a barrier against the easy distraction they provide. Use apps that block distracting websites or set your device on 'do not disturb ' mode during work hours.

5. Implement Behavioral Hacks:

Time Management: Delete social media apps or move them into a folder that's not on your home screen, making it physically harder to check it

.

Space Management: Set up physical boundaries for your devices. For example, make a rule to never bring your phone into the bedroom, which makes reaching for it first thing in the morning or last thing at night harder. To promote rest, prepare a book or magazine beside your bed instead of a device and get a book light.

Relationship Management: Set auto-responders for emails and messages outside your working hours, making it harder for others to expect immediate responses.

Self-Management: Instead of resorting to social media when stressed, disconnect your device and put it out of sight, making it harder to mindlessly scroll. Facilitate stress-relief by having alternatives ready, like stress balls or yoga mats.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Setting Internal Boundaries

6. Practice Deep Work:

Make it harder to give in to distractions by working in a quiet place free from digital devices, if possible. To make deep work easier, prepare all the materials you need for your task before you start so that you won't need to interrupt your work.

7. Encourage Deep Reading:

Remove digital reading apps from your devices or move them into a less accessible place, making it harder to default to skimming digital content. To facilitate deep reading, have physical books around your home and carry one with you for idle moments.

8. Incorporate Mindfulness:

Make it harder to instantly access your device by keeping it in a bag or drawer, not on your desk or in your pocket. This creates a barrier that interrupts mindless checking. To facilitate mindfulness, keep visual reminders like sticky notes around your workspace reminding you to breathe and be present.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

The Positives of Boundary Setting

Setting boundaries isn't just about warding off negatives—it also brings many positives, including:

1. **Emotional Regulation:** Clear boundaries can help you better manage your emotions.

2. **Rejection Sensitivity:** Boundary setting can help reduce Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD), a common challenge for people with ADHD.

3. **Energy Management:** Boundaries can help you manage your energy levels more effectively and prevent burnout.

4. **Empowerment:** Asserting your boundaries can be empowering, boosting self-trust and control over your life.

5. **Prioritization and Organization:** Setting boundaries can aid in managing your time and attention, helping you focus on the things that are most important to you.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Setting External Boundaries Looks Like.....

1. ✔ Physical Boundaries:
   Action: Practice Physical Removal by leaving spaces where you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, such as exiting a crowded room or party.

2. ✔ Emotional Boundaries:
   Action: Establish Mental and Emotional Boundaries by disengaging from relationships or conversations that cause emotional turmoil.

3. ✔ Energetic Boundaries:
   - Action: Focus on Redirecting Energy away from draining individuals or activities towards ones that enrich and fulfill you.

4. ✔ Mental Boundaries:
   Action: Safeguard your mental space by Avoiding Toxic Environments or situations that consistently undermine your values and beliefs.

5. ✔ Material and Financial Boundaries:
   Action: Uphold your boundaries by not lending belongings or money, representing a form of Limiting Contact in financial contexts.

6. ✔ Time Boundaries:
   Action: Implement Time Boundaries by stepping back from commitments that demand too much of your time and energy.

7. ✔ Body Boundaries:
   Action: Physical Removal or Ending Relationships can be applied here to distance yourself from situations or people that make you uncomfortable or unsafe.

.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Setting External Boundaries Looks Like……

9. ✔ Professional Boundaries:
   Action: In the workplace, Professional Boundaries might mean declining additional tasks or choosing to leave a job that consistently violates your boundaries.

10. ✔ Boundaries in Communication: - Action: Sometimes, Boundaries in Communication mean ending a conversation or not engaging in an argument to protect your mental and emotional space.

By implementing these actions, you can effectively set and maintain boundaries that prioritize your well-being. Remember that the need for communication may arise depending on the relationship context and your sense of safety, which can be explored further in future discussions.

But you decide when and how you do this.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Using Needs Instead of Feelings To Decide When To Set Boundaries

For those with alexithymia, often seen in ADHD people and more so in those with autism, identifying needs is especially useful. Needs can act as boundary flags. These universal essentials for well-being are key to our physical, emotional, and social health.

Here are some examples of fundamental human needs:

1. ✔ **Physical Well-being:** This includes the need for food, water, rest, exercise, shelter, and sexual expression.

2. ✔ **Safety:** The need for security, protection, predictability, and freedom from harm or fear.

3. ✔ **Connection:** The need for love, acceptance, belonging, empathy, friendship, intimacy, and community.

4. ✔ **Honesty:** The need for truth, authenticity, integrity, and trust in relationships.

5. ✔ **Autonomy:** The need for independence, choice, freedom, and personal control.



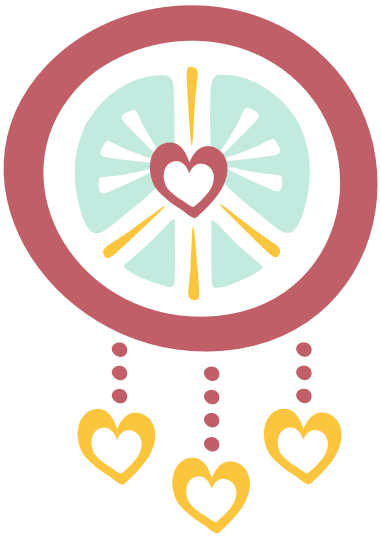
© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

6. ✔ **Meaning:** The need for purpose, growth, challenge, contribution , creativity, and making a difference.

7. ✔ **Peace:** The need for inner calm, tranquility, emotional stability, and harmony.

8 ✔ **Joy:** The need for fun, laughter, celebration, play, and experiencing joy.

Understanding and articulating unmet or violated needs is deeply therapeutic . This process, which may include setting boundaries, can offer valuable insights and may assist in expressing concerns effectively, resulting in a sense of empowerment. Just knowing your needs is empowering!



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

A Word About Nonviolent Communication

In Nonviolent Communication (NVC), expressing and understanding needs is a core principle. By clearly and directly expressing our needs to others, and empathizing with the needs of others, we can develop stronger boundaries and foster healthier relationships. We will use a modified version of this model to account for possible differences in neurodivergent communication when we work on our last communication unit next week.

Understanding needs will be the first building block of more effective communication.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

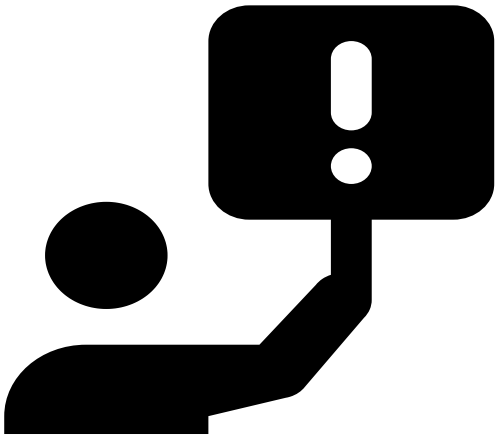
Needs Phrases

Needs Phrases

These 'needs phrases' are tools for your personal introspection, not intended for others. They help you understand and validate yourself. Prioritizing others needs and disregarding your own can make it hard to ask the question " What do I need?"

Masking often leads to a disconnect from your true self and a compromise of personal boundaries. Over time, it can make it difficult to recognize or prioritize your own needs. These phrases are designed to help you reconnect with your authentic self and better understand what you truly need.

Need phrases can be simple or more complicated.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Needs Phrases

1. "I need authenticity to feel connected to myself and others."
2. "I need opportunities for growth to feel a sense of personal accomplishment."
3. "I need to prioritize my physical well-being."
4. "I need a peaceful and quiet environment to focus."
5. "I need a more meaningful connection."
7. "Stability is a need for me to feel secure and grounded."
8. "I need more joy and play."
9. "I need a sense of safety to cultivate trust in my relationships."
10. "My need for autonomy supports my personal growth and self-understanding."
11. "I need more peace."
12. "I need to be heard."
13. "I need laughter."
14. "I need a challenge."
15. "I need autonomy."

Needs phrases show **self-awareness** which is crucial for setting boundaries and sharing them.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Knowing your Needs and Boundaries

Want to practice? Let's try.

Think about a recent situation where you may have been struggling to communicate a feeling especially if you sense it had to do with a boundary.



Situation:

Look at the needs list and see if you can identify a need that you had.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Boundaries, Needs, and Neurodivergent Rights

Group Exercise: Exploring and Expressing Needs

-

Objective:
To understand, articulate, and share personal needs. This exercise will help familiarize participants with their needs, which can provide insights into when they might need to set boundaries with themselves or others.

Instructions:

1. Browse through the list of needs provided. Select one that resonates with you personally as a need. They could be as simple as "fun" or more complex like "authenticity in the workplace".

2. Reflect on how it feels to identify and name your needs. What sensations arise in your body when you articulate these needs out loud?

3. What is one need you feel is currently being met and one you are struggling to fulfill?



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Boundaries, Needs, and Neurodivergent Rights

Group Exercise: Exploring and Expressing Needs

-

.

4. Share your reflections with the group.

We all have a right to our needs, and we inherently know what our needs are.

Note: This exercise will help familiarize you with your needs, which can provide clues to when you might need to set boundaries with yourself or others.

It also aims to foster a deeper understanding of personal needs, creating a space for introspection, connection, and mutual support.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

NEEDS LIST

1. Affection
2. Appreciation
3. Acceptance
4. Belonging
5. Clarity
6. Communication
7. Comfort
8. Companionship
9. Compassion
10. Consistency
11. Cooperation
12. Courage
13. Empathy
14. Encouragement
15. Freedom
16. Friendship
17. Growth
18. Harmony
19. Honesty
20. Integrity
21. Inspiration
22. Intimacy
23. Joy
24. Kindness
25. Love
26. Laughter
27. Mutual Recognition
28. Nurturing
29. Peace
30. Play
31. Recognition
32. Respect
33. Safety
34. Security
35. Stability
36. Support
37. Trust
38. Understanding
39. Validation
40. Warmth
41. Autonomy
42. Independence
43. Creativity
44. Skill development
45. Challenge
46. Meaning
47. Purpose
48. Knowledge
49. Learning
50. Health
51. Nutrition
52. Rest
53. Exercise
54. Cleanliness
55. Beauty
56. Harmony
57. Order
58. Balance
59. Contribution
60. Effectiveness
61. Efficiency
62. Progress
63. Celebrating
64. Dreaming
65. Mourning
66. Relaxation
67. Adventure
68. Fun
69. Discovery
70. Space
71. To matter
72. To be seen
73. To be heard
73. To be heard
74. To be understood
75. Touch
80. Spirituality
81. To be of service
83. Inclusion
84. Diversity
85. Community
86. Equality
87. Fairness
88. Justice
89. Respect
90. Dignity
91. Choice
92. Freedom
93. Movement

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

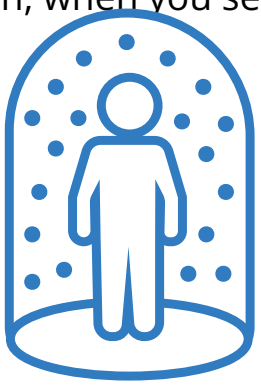
Special Issue: Energetic Boundaries and Empaths

Special Issue: Energetic Boundaries and Empaths

Many autistic and adhd women are particularly sensitive to the emotional states of those around them. Setting energetic boundaries is crucial. This sensitivity can sometimes lead to feeling overwhelmed or drained, especially when surrounded by emotionally demanding individuals. It may be that neurodivergent individuals are especially vulnerable to this issue. Here are some tips to help yourself with this:

1. Tuning in to Your Inner Voice: Trust it. It's key for empaths to cultivate this, which our group emphasizes over time. It's not a quick journey, but gradual. Through internal dialogue, identify your feelings and needs, which are often overshadowed by others. This self-awareness helps maintain emotional balance, mitigates stress, and establish boundaries with energy-drainers.

2. Physical Boundaries and Creative Disengagement: Establish physical boundaries when you need space to pursue your special interests or quiet time. Consider creative disengagement, like excusing yourself or subtly shifting the conversation, when you sense energy drain.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Special Issue: Energetic Boundaries and Empaths

3. Body Scan Meditations: This tool, shared in early sessions, eases alexithymia symptoms by promoting body relaxation and tension awareness. Find these widely online; Jon Kabat Zinn's are my preference.

4. Visualization Techniques: You can use visualization to create a mental shield or bubble around you during conversations with stressful people, allowing in only positive energy and keeping out the negative.

5. Mindful Breathing: Using mindful breathing exercises can ground you in the present moment, create distance from overwhelming feelings, and provide a much-needed energy reset.

6. Prioritizing Self-Care: Regular self-care is a form of boundary setting. This can mean setting aside time each day for relaxation or activities you enjoy for special interests. This has a cumulative effect.

For empaths, it's key to balance energy management and boundary setting for emotional health.



© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

Setting Boundaries in Specific Relationships

1. Boundaries at Work

Work environments can be particularly overwhelming for ADHD women, where demands on time, focus, and energy are constant. Setting boundaries here ensures you protect your productivity and mental health.

Common Challenges:

- Taking on too many tasks.
- Constant interruptions or last-minute requests.
- Lack of work-life balance due to emails or calls outside work hours.

Example Boundaries and Scripts:

- **Boundary: Managing workload**
  - Script: “I’d love to help, but I’m currently at capacity with my tasks. Let’s revisit this next week if it’s still needed.”
- **Boundary: Interruptions during focus time**
  - Script: “I’m focusing on a project right now. Can we set a time to discuss this later?”
- **Boundary: After-hours communication**
  - Script: “I don’t check emails after 6 PM, but I’ll address this first thing tomorrow morning.”

Tips for Work Boundaries:

- Use tools like calendar blocking to protect focus time.
- Set auto-responses for emails or messages during off-hours.
- Practice saying no to additional tasks when you’re overwhelmed.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

2. Boundaries with Family

Family dynamics can be tricky, especially when dealing with expectations of availability or emotional labor. ADHD women may feel obligated to “be there” for everyone, often at their own expense.

Common Challenges:

- Feeling like the go-to problem solver for family members.
- Lack of alone time due to family demands.
- Family members not respecting ADHD-specific needs, like quiet time or routines.

Example Boundaries and Scripts:

- **Boundary: Emotional labor**
  - Script: “I love you and want to support you, but I’m not in a place to give advice right now. Can we revisit this later?”
- **Boundary: Protecting downtime**
  - Script: “I need some quiet time to recharge. I’ll join the family activities after an hour.”
- **Boundary: Respecting routines**
  - Script: “My routine helps me stay organized. I’d appreciate it if we could stick to our agreed plan.”

Tips for Family Boundaries:

- Use “I” statements to express needs without sounding accusatory.
- Be consistent in reinforcing boundaries, even if it feels uncomfortable.
- Have a go-to phrase ready for unexpected requests, like, “Let me think about that and get back to you.”

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

3. Boundaries with Friends

Friendships are vital, but ADHD women may find themselves overextending to maintain connections, especially with friends who rely heavily on emotional support or constant communication.

Common Challenges:

- Feeling drained by friends who vent without reciprocating.
- Guilt about not responding immediately to texts or calls.
- Balancing time with friends and personal responsibilities.

Example Boundaries and Scripts:

- **Boundary: Limiting emotional venting**
  - Script: “I care about you, but I can’t give this conversation my full attention right now. Can we talk tomorrow when I can be more present?”
- **Boundary: Response time**
  - Script: “I’m not always able to reply right away, but I value our friendship and will respond as soon as I can.”
- **Boundary: Protecting personal time**
  - Script: “I have a lot on my plate this week, so I need to reschedule our plans. Let’s set a new date soon.”

Tips for Friend Boundaries:

- Reassure friends that your boundaries are about your needs, not a lack of care for them.
- Be honest about your capacity—overextending leads to resentment.
- Schedule time for friendships intentionally, so it feels balanced with other priorities.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

4. Boundaries in Romantic Relationships

In romantic relationships, ADHD women may struggle with balancing emotional availability and personal needs. Healthy boundaries ensure mutual respect and foster deeper connections.

Common Challenges:

- Feeling obligated to always be emotionally available.
- Partners not understanding ADHD-related struggles, like the need for structure or downtime.
- Overcommitting to shared activities at the expense of self-care.

Example Boundaries and Scripts:

- **Boundary: Emotional space**
  - Script: “I love spending time with you, but I need some alone time to recharge. Let’s plan a date night for tomorrow.”
- **Boundary: ADHD-specific needs**
  - Script: “I focus better when I stick to my routine. Can we agree on a way to support that?”
- **Boundary: Communicating expectations**
  - Script: “When I’m feeling overwhelmed, I may need a little extra patience. I’ll let you know when I need help.”

Tips for Romantic Boundaries:

- Communicate openly about ADHD-related challenges and needs.
- Ensure boundaries go both ways—support your partner’s needs as well.
- Set time for shared activities while preserving personal time.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

5. Boundaries in Digital Interactions

The online world can be overwhelming for ADHD women, with constant notifications, social media pressures, and expectations for instant responses. Setting digital boundaries helps protect your time and mental clarity.

Common Challenges:

- Feeling pressured to reply to texts or emails immediately.
- Spending too much time scrolling on social media.
- Overloading your digital calendar with tasks or events.

Example Boundaries and Scripts:

- **Boundary: Response time**
  - Script: “I check emails twice a day, so I might not respond right away. Thanks for understanding!”
- **Boundary: Social media use**
  - Script: “I’m limiting my time on social media to focus on other things. I’ll still check in occasionally.”
- **Boundary: Digital detox**
  - Script: “I’m taking a break from my phone after 8 PM to wind down for the night.”

Tips for Digital Boundaries:

- Use apps to limit screen time or block distractions.
- Turn off unnecessary notifications to reduce digital overwhelm.
- Create dedicated times for checking messages or emails.

Reflection Prompts for Relationship Boundaries

- **What situations in my relationships feel draining or overwhelming?**
- **Which relationships feel unbalanced or one-sided?**
- **What is one small boundary I can set today to protect my energy or time?**

Setting boundaries in relationships is a form of self-respect and care. When you assert your needs, you not only honor yourself but also create healthier dynamics with the people in your life. Would you like more examples, or are there specific relationships you'd like to focus on?

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.

© Flourishing Women LLC, 2024. All rights reserved.