



Make a not-to-do list

You've probably heard about the power of saying no and the importance of setting healthy boundaries in your personal life and at work. A well-intentioned to-do list can be a great way to get organised and manage stress. But have you ever thought of creating a not-to-do list?

Making your own not-to-do list can help you identify what drains your mind, body and spirit. Here's a worksheet to get you started.

Fill in each of the boxes with things, activities and/or people that frequently:

Do not make me feel seen, supported, heard or safe:

Make me feel overwhelmed, agitated, anxious and/or stressed:

Make me feel undervalued:

Make me feel obligated:

Waste my time, drain my energy or that I simply do not enjoy:

Put me in a bad mood:

Cost too much time and/or money:

Now, re-read the list you made on the first page. Circle five things you can choose not to do anymore. Write them below.

I am not going to:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

Next, use those five statements and give yourself an affirmation as to what you can or will do instead and why.

Instead, I will:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

For example:

I am not going to spend time with _____.
It's OK to turn down an invitation.

I am not going to agree to go home for Christmas next year. It's too expensive and stressful.

Instead, I will use that time to exercise, which makes me feel good and is good for me.

Instead, I will arrange another time to visit my parents, such as after the Christmas rush when travel is cheaper.

Sources:

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HelpGuide, "Setting Healthy Boundaries in Relationships." <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/setting-healthy-boundaries-in-relationships.htm> Accessed 19 January 2023

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, "8 Tips on Setting Boundaries for Your Mental Health." <https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/young-adults/8-tips-on-setting-boundaries-for-your-mental-health/> Accessed 19 January 2023

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