



Wishing You **Strong Boundaries** this Holiday Season

Even the merriest among us know that the holidays can be emotionally, physically and psychologically taxing. In addition to buying gifts, negotiating travel plans and shuttling from gathering to gathering, many of us spend extended time with our families—and every family, no matter how loving, has its fair share of challenges. When difficult family dynamics combine with holiday-season stress, we may find ourselves at a crossroads. Do we spend the holidays in a state of discomfort? Or do we set boundaries around our time, space, and energy? Read on to learn how to reduce holiday stress by setting boundaries.

Why are boundaries important?

Setting boundaries is necessary to improve our health and relationships. When people don't go beyond our limits because we shared our feelings, we feel respected. This feeling often results in increased happiness and contentment. When we set boundaries, we also get clarity on who we are and what we want. This clarity brings focus to our values, our identity and our well-being. These characteristics tend to increase our self-esteem and assertiveness.

Tips for creating boundaries during holidays:

- **Know your limits.** Identify them and recognize how they can affect your mental health and relationships.
- **Speak up.** Remember that when you share your thoughts, it helps you avoid feeling resentful.
- **Be respectful.** Share what you want in a calm, simple and direct way.
- **Just say “No.”** The word “no” is a complete statement, and you don't always have to explain yourself.
- **Give yourself some credit.** Take pride in setting boundaries. It takes courage, vulnerability, honesty and respect. You will feel better about setting boundaries the more you do it.

While it may be intimidating at first, setting boundaries will help you feel more at ease. Strong boundaries will likely help reduce holiday stress and feelings of resentment toward those around you. For additional support and guidance on how to set healthy boundaries, visit EAP4YOU.com or reach out to your EAP.