SELF-COMPASSION

Setting and maintaining boundaries can be difficult.

Having good boundaries can help a person feel safe, respected, and valued. Boundaries help increase self-esteem and self-compassion, allowing us to prioritise our own needs. However, not setting good boundaries can increase stress levels, increase feeling of anger, resentment, and can sometimes cause physical changes to our bodies.

Examples of when we do not hold good boundaries:

- We say 'Yes' when we would really like to say 'No'

- Other people's problem become our priority

- We apologise too much and don't say what we are really feeling and needing

Healthy boundaries allow us to conserve emotional energy and help us to prioritise ourselves, whether it is self-care, relationships, or career aspirations.

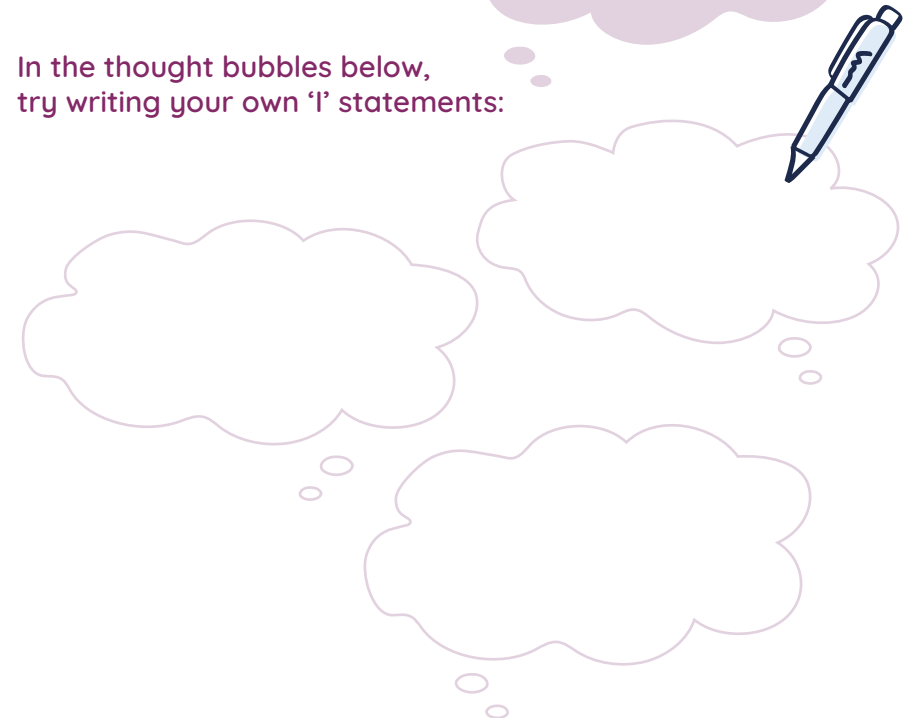There is no set rule. Boundaries vary from person to person. **This is about you and your needs.**

Setting boundaries can be difficult if you have not been used to it. But changing how you reply to asks of you can help.

Be assertive by using 'I' statements

I feel...I need...

What I need...

I feel undervalued and I need some time to myself...

What I need, is some help around the house

In the thought bubbles below, try writing your own 'I' statements:

Learn to say 'No' – No is a complete sentence.

Example – if someone asked you out on a date
– you can absolutely say **'NO'** without giving any reason.

If a colleague asks you to cover their shift
– you can absolutely say **'NO'**, without giving a reason.

"WHEN YOU SAY, 'YES' TO OTHERS MAKE SURE YOU ARE NOT SAYING 'NO' TO YOURSELF."

– Paulo Coelho

What is self-compassion?

We tend to be supportive, compassionate, and understanding towards others and more critical of ourselves. Being compassionate to ourselves helps to reduce anxiety, depression, creates better relationships and increases our self-worth.

Self-compassion is about how we should treat ourselves with kindness, understanding and acceptance.

SELF-COMPASSION IS SIMPLY GIVING THE SAME KINDNESS TO OURSELVES THAT WE WOULD GIVE TO OTHERS.
-Christopher Germer

This includes:

- Allowing our feelings and not always judging them

- Making mistakes and understanding that it is okay to make those mistakes

- Instead of always doing what is expected, doing things for our own wellbeing

Why is self-compassion important?

- It increases our happiness

- Decreases anxiety and depression

- It's considering ourselves the way we would consider someone we care about.

THE OPPOSITE OF SELF-COMPASSION IS SELF-CRITICISM, WHICH IS NOT HEALTHY FOR US.

How can I develop more self-compassion?

There are many ways to develop self-compassion. By practising ways to stimulate our body's soothe system, we can begin to grow an attitude of kindness, warmth, concern, understanding and strength within us. We can then use this attitude to respond to our own struggles, rather than going back to our usual self-critical habits.

Taking care of ourselves

By being kind and caring to ourselves, we can increase our own compassion. It's important to treat yourself by spending time doing something that you enjoy.

Everyone is different; someone's idea of treating themselves could be someone else's nightmare. Experiment with activities and find out what you enjoy.

The activities might not take your emotional pain away or solve your problem but see what happens when you are kind to yourself.

Activity Examples

- Bake
- Ride a bike
- Watch TV
- Have a hot bubble bath
- Go for a walk in nature
- Do relaxation/meditation
- Read a book
- Paint, draw, colour in

Write down your own activities that you enjoy:

Try and plan one activity into your day – it does not have to be time consuming; it could be something that may only take 5 minutes.

When would you do this activity? Morning, afternoon or evening?

_____

_____

What stops you from doing this activity?

_____

_____

What activities have you tried this month?

_____

_____

Are there any activities that you would like to include in your future?

_____

_____

What could you do to make this happen?

_____

_____

Taking care of others

Taking care of others' should never come at the expense of taking care of ourselves. However, the more time we spend being compassionate, be it towards ourselves or others, the more our soothe system is active and helps with our general mental health and wellbeing.

Some ways that you can take care of others include:

Thanking someone for the things they do for you

Plan a kind act or gesture for someone you care about

Do something caring to cheer someone up

Show kindness to a stranger

Taking care of business/school

Compassion is not just about the warm fuzzy stuff but involves facing some of the hard stuff and struggles.

Sometimes when we come across a problem we might want to run away, instead of face it. However, with compassion, there are things that we can try to break it down into manageable steps. This can help build our confidence and self-esteem.

Different problems will require different compassionate actions. One way of doing this is to act opposite of what you are thinking/feeling, for example:

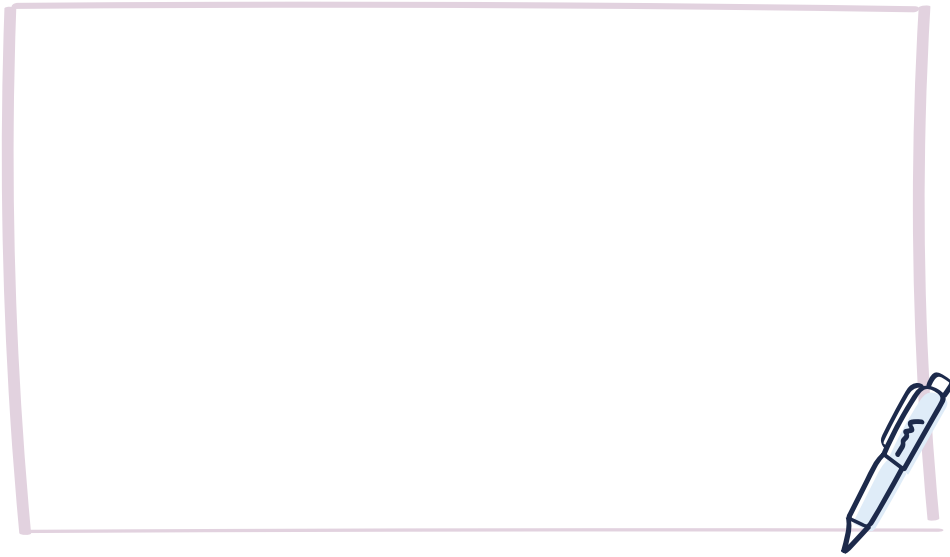| Threat thought/behaviour	Opposite
Avoid – Not doing things that I need or would like to be doing because it makes me anxious.	**Don't avoid** the situation. If realistically it is a safe situation find a way to gradually face it and stay in the situation. This could be done by breaking it down into more manageable steps. The more you place yourself into a repeating situation, will help reduce your anxiety and slowly build confidence.
Give up – you feel unable to do anything about the problem.	**Don't give up** – try problem solving. Write down what the problem is. Then write the possible solutions and the pro's and cons of each. Pick one solution and break it down into steps. If it doesn't work try a new one.
Procrastinate – put off things that need to be done as you might think it is too hard, you are not good enough or you may find it boring.	**Get started** - Break the task into small steps. No matter how you feel, get started. Once you start you might find it is easier than expected.

TRY IT!

Write down your problem......

Write down the opposite of your threat thought/behaviour...

Write down your threat thought/behaviour....

Write down steps to overcome your problem....