

Helpful Guides

Learn when to **say NO**

Knowing when to say no can be very difficult. Most of us don't like saying no to tasks for fear of causing inconvenience, missing opportunities or letting down our friends. However, knowing your limits is vital for your mental and physical health.



Listen to your intuition

It can be hard to know when to say no. Sometimes, we don't know whether a task is something we just don't want to do – when, sadly, there are things we all have to do from time to time – or something we ought to avoid.

Learn to read and trust your intuition by noticing changes in yourself and your relationships, including lacking time to do things you enjoy or need to do, like cooking, cleaning or spending time with family.

Additionally, if your gut tells you to say no to something, it may well be the right thing to do. Always examine this gut feeling, but try not to dismiss it entirely.

Know your circumstances

Not everyone can manage the same level of stress or number of commitments. If you have a health condition, disability or caring responsibility, you may find that you have less time and energy for things than your friends or even someone with the same circumstances.

Alternatively, you may have a demanding job, a high-commitment hobby, or just be naturally lower energy than others.

All of these things are normal and okay, so it's important for you to know and recognise your own individual circumstances and only take on as much as you can manage. This will be different for everyone, and you should try not to let others dictate how much you can do.

If you're struggling to say no and find that it's impacting your mental health and well-being, get in touch with the Fircroft Trust and discover how we can offer support.

If you struggle with setting personal boundaries and knowing your own limits, there are ways that we can help. Once you've found some different coping mechanisms, try them out and see what works for you.

Here are ways you can learn to say 'no' too:

Prioritise

Sometimes, it will feel like you can't say no to anything. However, this is rarely true. We will always have commitments that are more important than others because, for example, the people involved mean a lot to us or the consequences of saying no are negative.

Learning to prioritise helps you to reduce the number of things on your plate while minimising adverse outcomes. How you prioritise will depend on your values and the things that are most important to you; these may include:

- Family
- Friends
- A hobby
- Work or your business
- Self-care
- Education or study

For example, you might say no to an opportunity at work – even if it could further your career – to make time for family or your existing duties. Similar opportunities will arise again, perhaps when you have more capacity for taking them on.

Know the signs of burnout

We've all heard the term 'burnout' – but what is it? Burnout is excessive tiredness or exhaustion caused by stress or being overworked. It can result in feelings of lethargy and apathy and make you feel like you aren't achieving as much as you used to.

Burnout – while it can arise from anything – typically occurs from work-related stress. By recognising the signs of burnout generally and in yourself, you can learn when to say no based on how you feel.

Signs of burnout include:

- Excessive tiredness
- Feelings of sadness, apathy or anger
- Lack of motivation (especially where it once existed)
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Perceived or actual reduced achievement without other cause

See how the Fircroft Trust can help you in other ways...

Visit thefircrofttrust.org and see how our Specialist Services can benefit you.

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