



EHN CANADA

Mental Health & Self-Care for the Holidays



December 17, 2020



Discussion Points



- Challenges facing families over the holidays and the importance of setting healthy boundaries, particularly in light of pandemic-related safety precautions and restrictions
- Tips for practicing self-care while supporting loved ones struggling with mental health and addiction
- How, when and where to refer someone for help



The holidays are going to be a little different this year ...

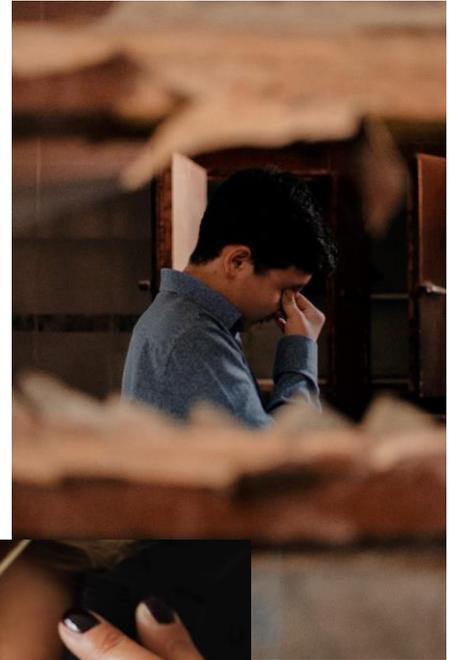


- Isolation
- Small or no social gatherings
- Maintaining autonomy
- Following proper pandemic related guidelines (i.e. social distancing and mask wearing)
- Increased stress (i.e. financial, family dynamics)
- Higher rates of seasonal affective disorder, mental health and substance use problems



Challenges (Triggers) for Family Members

- Phone calls from family member in crisis
- Relapses
- Worsening psychological and emotional health in loved ones (resulting from increased isolation)
- Suicidal ideation and negative thinking patterns



Tips for practicing self-care while supporting loved ones struggling with mental health and addiction

- Boundaries
- Self-Compassion
- Self-Care
- Reaching out for your own help





Setting Healthy Boundaries

What are boundaries?



“Good fences make
good neighbours.”

The Mending Wall,
Robert Frost

Types of Boundaries



Unhealthy		Healthy	
Non-existent/Limited	✗	Flexible	✓
Loose/Porous	✗	Safe	✓
Rigid	✗	Connected	✓



Knowing our Boundaries

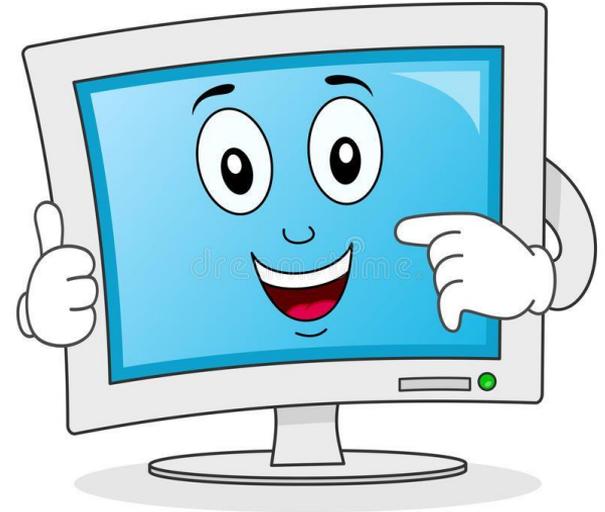


“A boundary is the edge of one of our root beliefs about ourselves and the world. We are like computers, and our beliefs are software with which we’ve been programmed.

They control our decisions, perspectives, feelings, and interactions, so they determine our destiny.

There is nothing more important than unearthing what we really believe to be true about ourselves and our world.”

Glennon Doyle, Untamed.



A Boundary-Setting Roadmap



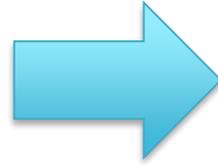
1. Bill of Rights

I have the
right to...

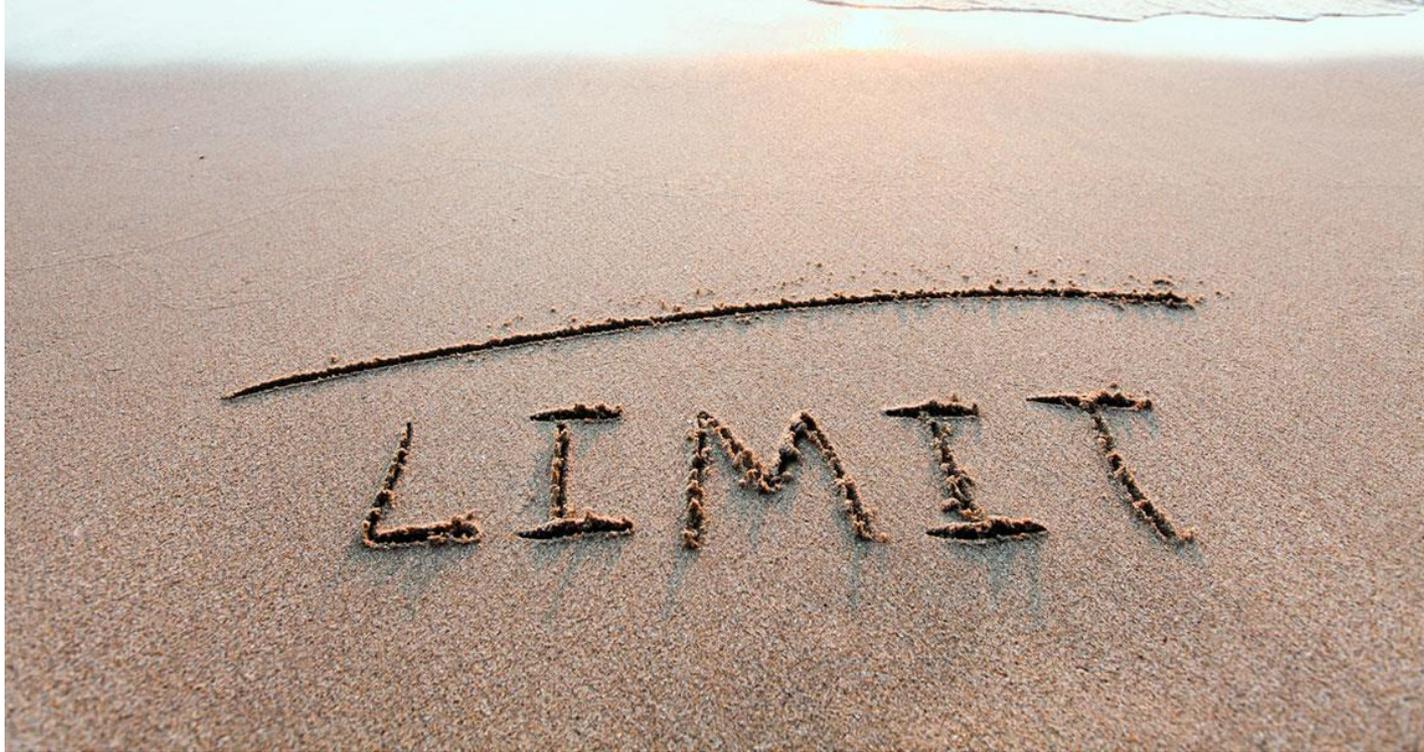


2. Identify Emotions

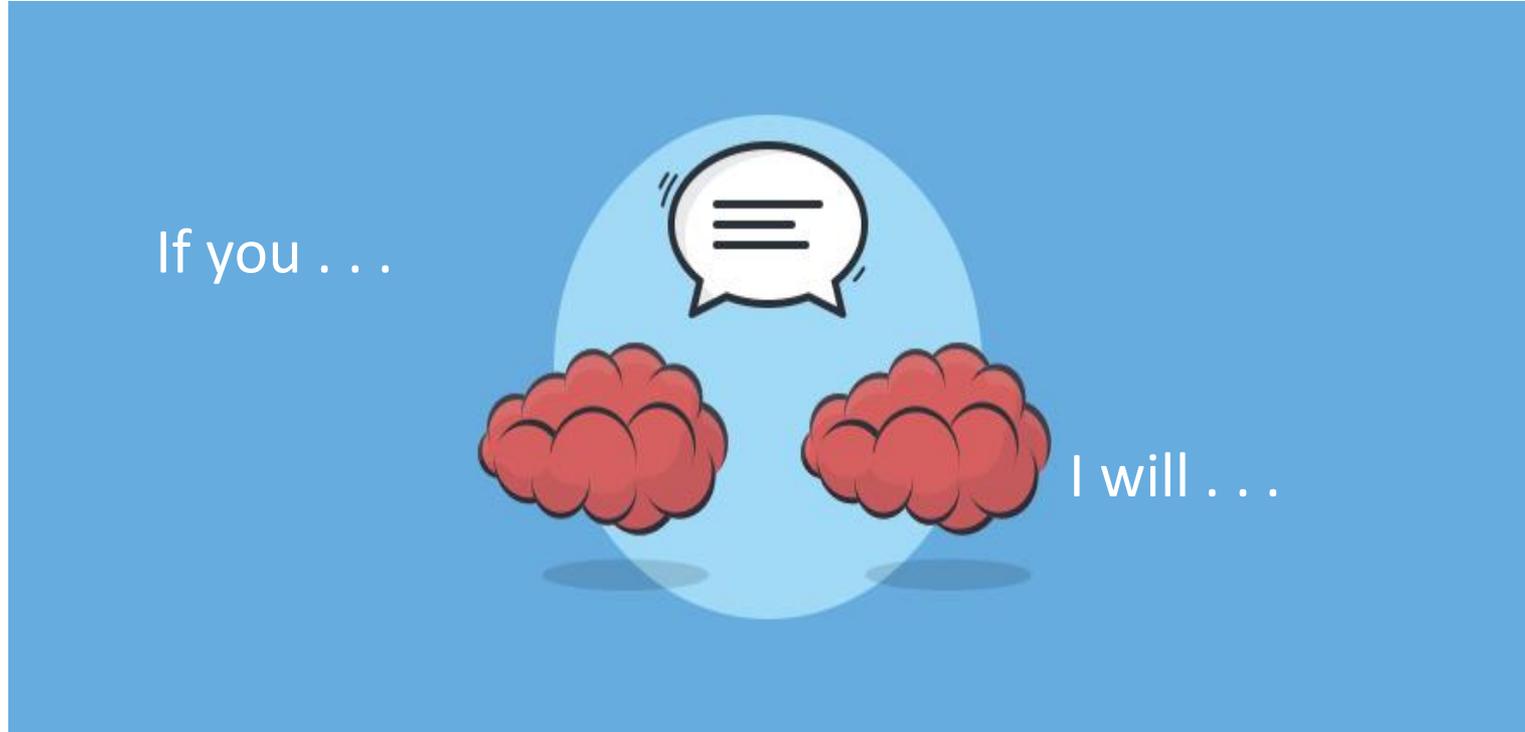
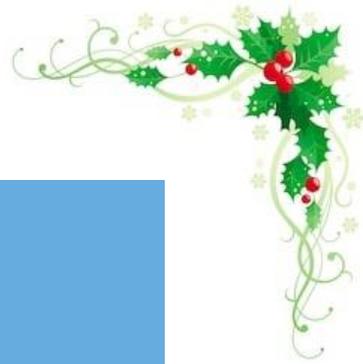
- A. ACTIVATOR
- B. BELIEF/S
- C. CONSEQUENCES
- D. DISPUTE
- E. EFFECTIVE BELIEF



3. Set Limits



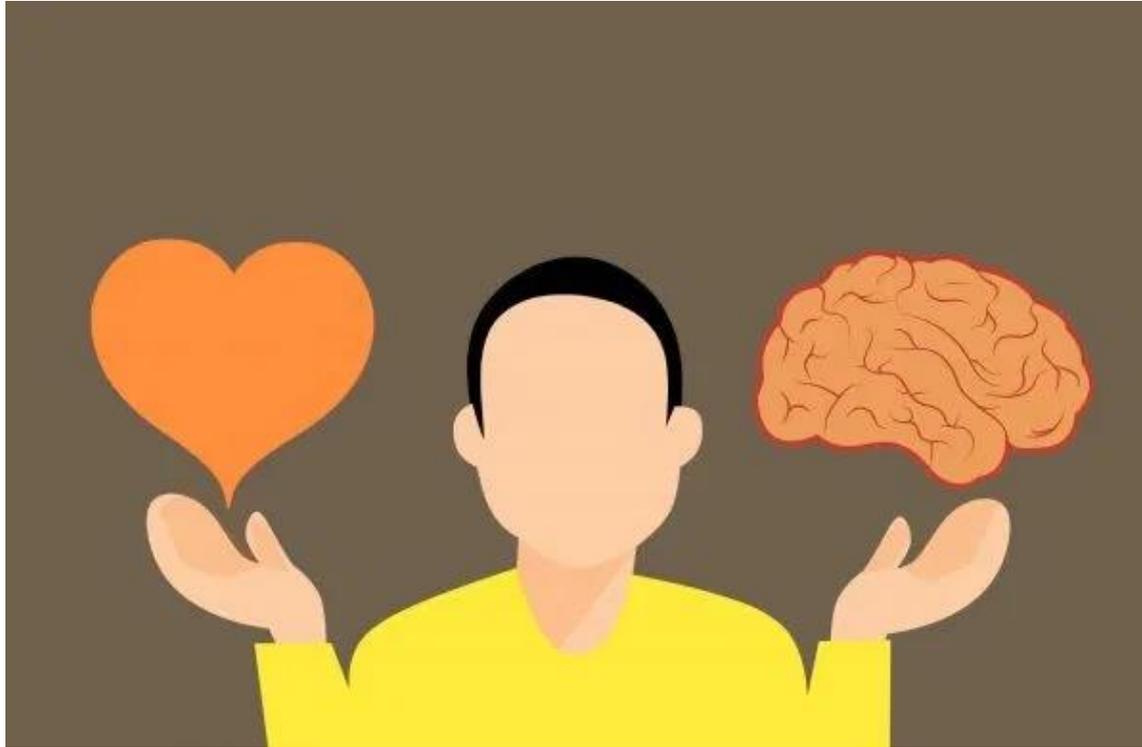
4. Assert Needs



5. Defend Boundaries



6. Listen to your Instincts



7. Maintain Boundaries



Purpose of Boundaries

1. Bill of Rights
2. Identify Emotions
3. Set Limits
4. Assert Needs
5. Defend Boundaries
6. Listen to Instincts
7. Maintain Boundaries

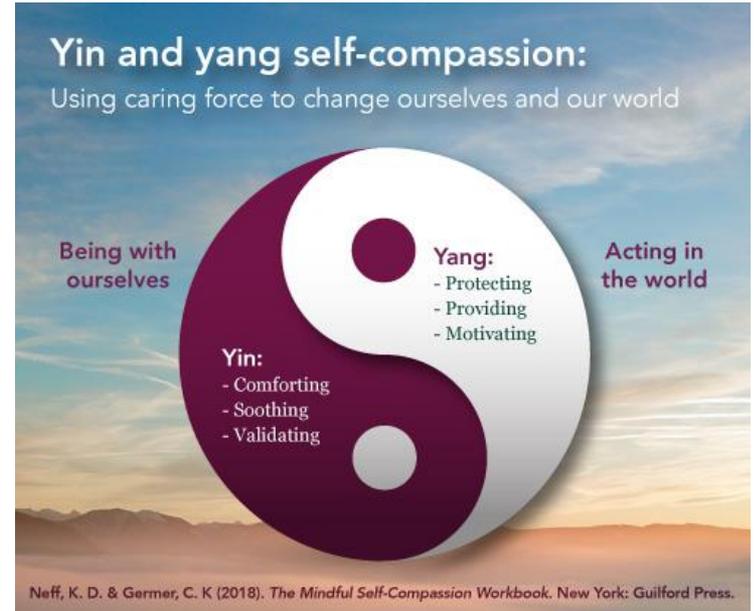




Self-Compassion & Self-Care

Self-Compassion and Self-Care

- Self-care is an attitude
- Self-care is also about how you let yourself be treated by other people including home life, friends, and workplace.
- You are indeed worth caring for.
- Asking for help and setting boundaries are ways to care for self as well.
- People who extend themselves too much and leave nothing for themselves may end up feeling irritable and resentful.
- Self-care can include carving out little areas of freedom to do anything you like to do including doing things that are playful or fun.



Examples of Self-Care

- Bubble bath
- Practicing Gratitude
- Zoom coffee date with a friend
- Exercise (Yoga, walk/run)
- Sleep hygiene
- Hobbies
- Meditation/Prayer



Ways to Support Your Loved Ones During the Holidays

- Help your loved one to take part in activities that are meaningful to them
- Understand that avoidance, irritability and withdrawal are common symptoms
- Do not provide excuses or cover up for the individual
- Do not work harder than the person you're trying to help.
- Engage in your own self care and maintain familiar daily routines



Seeking Help

- For family members (yourself)
 - Consider seeing a mental health professional yourself (individual, groups, programs).
 - Join a support group (i.e. Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, S-Anon, CoDA, SMART Recovery)
 - Books, videos, blogs



Resources for Family Members



- Family Education Workshop
- smartrecovery.org
- al-anon.org
- nar-anon.org
- codacanada.ca
- sanon.org
- moordisorders.ca
- “Everything Changes” (Conyers); “Codependent No More” (Beattie)
- “Pleasure Unwoven” (McCauley)
- jaggedlittleedges.com (Rozzano)

**YOU ARE
NOT
ALONE**



THANK YOU!

Questions?



References

- Adapted from: Canadian Mental Health Association (2006). Caring Together: Families as Partners in the Mental Health and Addiction System. Date viewed: January 18, 2020. Web address: <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/caring-together-families-as-partners-in-the-mental-health-and-addiction-system/#notes>
- Brene Brown, 2010, The Gifts of Imperfection
- Adapted from: Padraig O'Morain, Kindfulness, 2014
- 2018, Weiss, Robert, Prodependence: Moving Beyond Codependency
- 2009, Conyers, Beverley, Everything Changes

