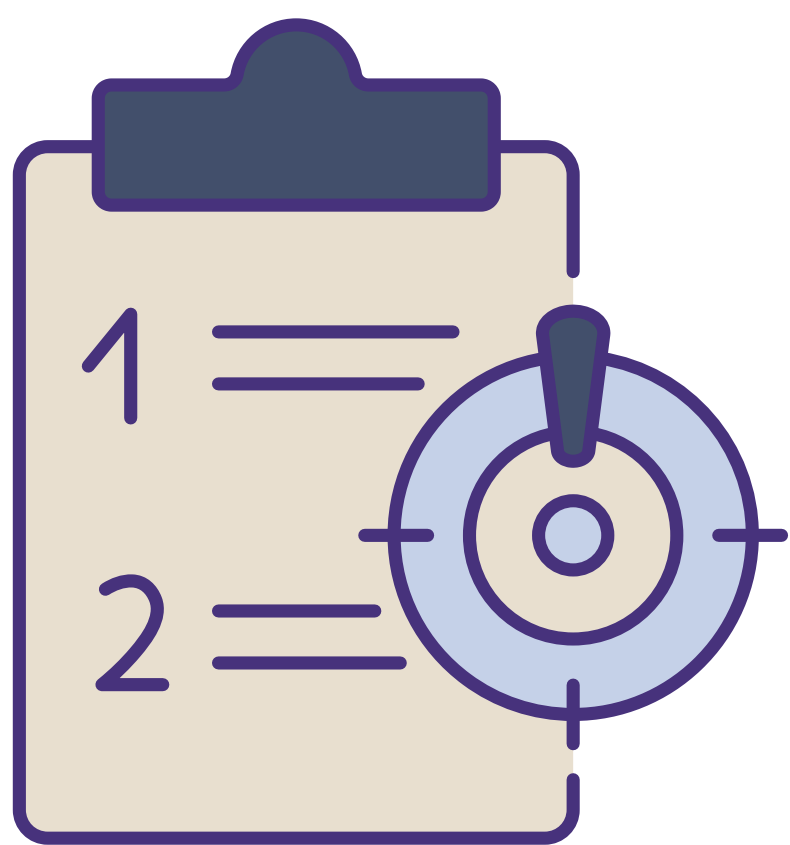


Setting Boundaries for HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

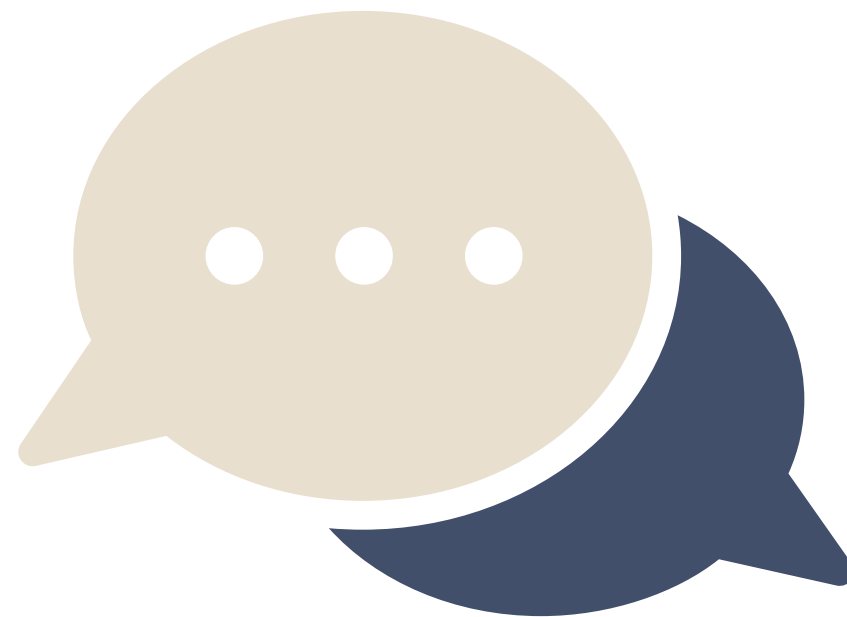
1 Reflect on Your Comfort Level

Take a few minutes to think about which parts of the holiday season feel manageable and which feel overwhelming. Are there specific traditions, activities, or topics that you'd rather avoid this year?



4 Define Your Non-Negotiables

Identify a few things that are essential for your emotional well-being, like quiet time or limiting certain conversations. Knowing your “non-negotiables” helps set clear boundaries for yourself and others.



2 Plan What You Want to Say

Prepare a few responses for tough conversations. This way, you'll feel more confident and ready to handle those moments without getting caught off guard.

- “I’d rather focus on positive memories today.”
- “Thank you for your concern, but I like to keep that topic private.”
- “That’s a sensitive subject for me. Perhaps we could talk about [something else] instead?”

3 Communicate Your Needs in Advance

Reach out to a close family member or friend to share how you’re feeling. Let them know if there’s anything they can do to support you, like redirecting conversations or helping you take a break.



5 Create an Exit Plan

Decide in advance if you’d like to have a set time to leave, or simply give yourself permission to leave when it feels right. Knowing you have a plan to exit if things get overwhelming can bring peace of mind.

Setting Boundaries for HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

6 Give Yourself Permission to Step Away

Let yourself take breaks during gatherings. If emotions run high, it's okay to step outside, go for a short walk, or sit quietly in your designated space. Taking small breaks can help you stay grounded.



9 Keep Your Boundaries Simple and Clear

You don't owe anyone a detailed explanation of your needs or choices. Keep your boundaries simple and direct, like, "This is what I need right now," without feeling pressure to justify yourself.



7 Set Up a Quiet Space for Yourself

Whether you're at home or visiting someone, create a quiet corner where you can take a breather if needed. This space can help you recharge and process your emotions privately.

Include comforting items like:

- Favorite blanket
- An uplifting book
- Calming essential oils
- Noise-cancelling headphones
- A journal

8 Honor Your Feelings Without Judgment

Emotions can be unpredictable, especially during the holidays. Allow yourself to feel whatever comes up—whether it's joy, sadness, or a mix of both. There's no "right" way to feel, and it's okay to protect your emotional well-being.



10 Limit the Events You Attend

You don't have to say yes to every invitation. Choose only the gatherings that feel meaningful or manageable for you this year, and feel free to decline others without guilt.