WORKSHEET 101 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Setting limits at work

Saying no, negotiating, protecting your time

AIM

Help the person identify situations in which they go beyond their limits (hours, availability, extra tasks) and prepare assertive responses to protect them.

WHO IT IS FOR

Difficulty saying no, over-involvement, risk of burnout.

DURATION

20 min in session; putting it into practice

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Identify the limits most often crossed and their cost.
2. Clarify the desired limits (hours, replying in the evening, tasks accepted).
3. Prepare assertive sentences (worksheet 74): refusing, negotiating a deadline, asking for tasks to be prioritised.
4. Rehearse and choose a low-stakes situation.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Setting limits also depends on the context (job insecurity, company culture): look for realistic room for manoeuvre and, if needed, the support of occupational health services.

REFERENCES

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Speed, B. C., Goldstein, B. L. & Goldfried, M. R. (2018). Assertiveness training: A forgotten evidence-based treatment. Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 25(1), e12216.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 101 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Setting limits at work

When we always take on more, we end up exhausted. Setting limits doesn't make you a bad colleague: it is what allows you to keep going. Prepare your sentences in advance.

1. The limits I most often go beyond (hours, emails in the evening, extra tasks).
2. The limits I would like to set: _____
3. My sentences: "I can't take that on as well this week", "What is the priority?", "I'll get back to you tomorrow morning".
4. A situation to try it in this week: _____

Situation	My limit	What I said	What happened

What do I fear if I set a limit? And what really happens?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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