

Defend your priorities, at work and home

Adaptive module

~20 min

Working 55 hours a week raises the risk of stroke by about a third, as the WHO and The Lancet have shown. Setting boundaries is therefore not a matter of comfort. This module gives learners exact phrases to say, with no apology or justification, along with the broken record technique for holding firm when someone says no, and the “who does what” conversation to have with their manager and with loved ones.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 State a clear boundary without apologizing or justifying yourself: hours, workload, meetings, the right to disconnect.
- 02 Hold firm when told no, using the broken record technique, and rely on allies among your colleagues.
- 03 Identify the overload you impose on yourself, through perfectionism or a need to control everything.
- 04 Have the “who does what” conversation with your partner and with your manager, without blame or a victim stance.

WHO IT'S FOR

Anyone who wants to set boundaries at work and negotiate a fairer division of tasks.

- **Prerequisite:** Work-life balance: Stop trying to do it all

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Broken record technique (Manuel J. Smith, 1975)
- Assertiveness / self-assertion, drawing on assertiveness training (A. Salter, J. Wolpe)
- Adult stance / stepping out of the victim role, drawing on transactional analysis (Eric Berne) and the Karpman drama triangle
- Afthonios method of ready-made phrases for setting boundaries without apologizing or justifying yourself

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Kivimäki et al., The Lancet: working 55 hours a week or more increases the risk of stroke by 33% (meta-analysis of more than 600,000 people), confirmed by the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization (+35%)
- OECD, time-use database: women spend about 2 hours more per day than men on unpaid domestic work
- Right to disconnect: written into law in France (2017), Australia (2024), and about fifteen countries in total
- Seibert, Wang & Courtright, Journal of Applied Psychology (2011) – team members' autonomy and team effectiveness