Safety Planning for the Holidays

With the holiday season upon us, many will be celebrating the close of 2021 with family and friends. While this time of year can bring up feelings of joy, love, and connection, it can also be an uncomfortable, distressing, or deeply painful time. For people who were harmed by those closest to them, either through intentional violence and abuse or through invalidation and silencing, this time of year can be especially difficult. So, we wanted to offer a few strategies to help you feel safer and more at ease this holiday season.

1. **Decide your boundaries first** - Not every relationship has healthy power dynamics & sometimes loved ones are not open to having these conversations, but when safe, clearly and concisely communicate what boundaries you need to have a positive relationship.

2. **Fill up on love and affirmation before you go** - Affirmations or mantras are short sentences that help to activate positive energy and help to restructure our thoughts. Affirmations that you could say are “I deserve joy, love and safety”, “I deserve to relax during my break”, “My worth is not defined by others”.

3. **Prioritize your healthy coping skills** - Focus on back-to-basics self-care like drinking water, eating nutritious food, moving your body, rest, and doing things you enjoy.

4. **Activate your support system** - Stay connected with people who make you feel joy and peace.

5. **Create a safety plan** - Home is not always a safe place to be. Scan the QR code to access Loveisrespect’s interactive safety planning guide or check out the resources at the link below.

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**Self-Care And Setting Boundaries During The Holidays**

College brings a new sense of self-awareness and growth, so when returning home, it’s important to establish boundaries with those around us and within ourselves to nurture who we are now.

To know what your boundaries are, it’s important to take time to reflect on what is important to you. What makes you feel happy and recharged? What makes you feel alone and sad? Boundaries are a reflection of what makes you feel respected and cared for.

Not every relationship has a power balance and not everyone will be open to having these conversations, but when it is safe, clearly and concisely communicate what boundaries you need maintained to have a healthy, positive relationship. Remember that it is okay to calmly but firmly disengage or walk away from toxic conversations.

Additionally, maintaining internal boundaries can look like making time for self-care, releasing guilt around advocating for yourself, practicing self-compassion, nurturing your emotions instead of minimizing them, and respecting your limits.

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