



Self-Help Guide: Disrupt People Pleasing Patterns

Healthy Relationships, Healthy Boundaries

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WHAT IS PEOPLE PLEASING?

People pleasing tendencies are characterized by putting others' needs above your own.

It's a compulsive pattern of behaviours in which a person helps, care-takes or rescues everyone around them, whether in their personal or professional life.



How to Disrupt People-Pleasing Patterns

Doing things to make others happy is not a bad thing! It becomes problematic when we derive our own self-worth entirely from others' reactions, and our lives revolve around appeasing others.



SO HOW DO WE OVERCOME THIS *PATTERN OF BEHAVIOUR?*

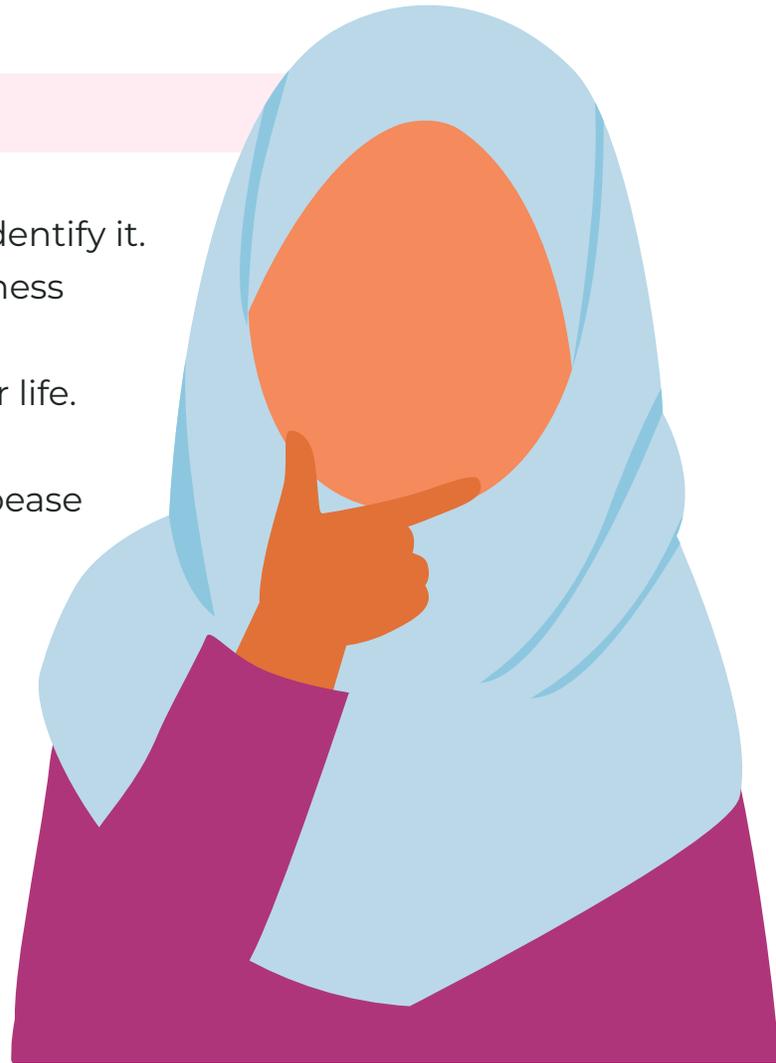
1. Recognize the Patterns

- To disrupt the pattern, we first have to identify it. One way to do this is by building awareness around where people-pleasing shows up in your life.
- Observe whom you feel the need to appease and earn approval from the most.



ASK YOURSELF:

- How would I feel if this person were disappointed in me?
- When is the last time I said 'no' to them?
- Is our relationship based on my tendency to always give?

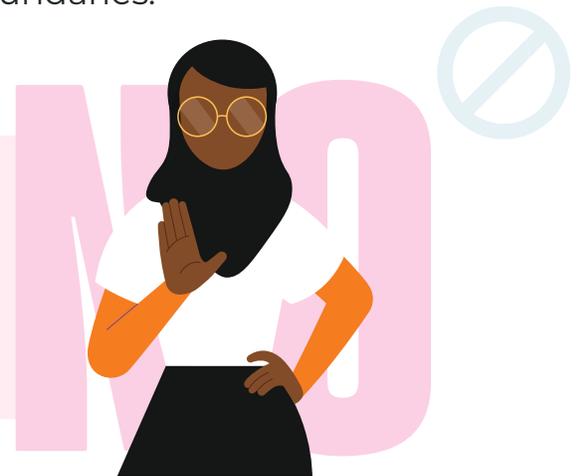


2. Practice Being Assertive

Assertiveness is a skill that can be learned! It is an important aspect of being able to say 'no,' voicing our opinions, and setting boundaries.

EMBRACE SAYING 'NO'

Statements to Cultivate Assertiveness



- **Declining with Clarity:**

Respond with a simple "No, thank you" or "No, thank you. I won't be able to." Express your decision without the need to apologize and then remain silent.

- **Gentle but Firm:**

Show appreciation for the invitation by saying, "Thank you for considering me, but that won't be feasible for me."

- **Suggesting an Alternative:**

"I won't be available, but why not ask Joe? I believe he could assist."

- **Last-Minute Limit:**

"This month's calendar is full, but if you're planning to go ____ soon, I'd love to join next time. Just let me know ahead."

- **Keeping It Professional:**

"I appreciate your thoughtfulness, but I've dedicated this quarter to launching my new project, so interviews are off my schedule."

- **Grateful Acknowledgment:**

"I'm deeply touched by your kind offer and your support means a lot. Unfortunately, I'm unable to assist right now."

ASSERTIVENESS STATEMENTS CONTINUED:

- **Timing Matters:**

"I'd be interested, but I'm tied up until August. Could you check back as the date approaches?" or "None of those dates align, but I'm eager to meet. Send more options."

- **Respectfully Declining:**

"I'm genuinely thankful for asking, but my commitments are already set."

- **Recommendations Speak Volumes:**

"I can't, but I can connect you with someone who might be able to lend a hand."

- **Prior Commitment:**

"I've already communicated with my partner/therapist/coach about not taking on extra tasks now. I'm striving for balance." or "It's my son's dance recital day, and I'm devoted to attending."

- **Self-Aware Response:**

"No, but here's what I can manage..." Limit the task to what suits you.

- **Request for Consideration:**

"Let me mull it over and I'll revert to you."

Sharing the Load:

"The accounting department often handles office events. Let's ask Marketing to take the lead this year."



3. Look for Self-Worth Within

As a people-pleaser, your self-worth may be rooted in what you can do for others. Try disrupting this by:

- Figuring out what you are good at and developing these competencies—this will help you feel more confident while exploring interests that are entirely for you.
- Trying to be less critical of your mistakes - Practice self-compassion and forgive yourself instead.
- Practicing positive affirmations - Here are some to get you started (remember to practice these when you're grounded and regulated):



“I can let go of taking responsibility for other people’s problems.”

“I can let go of guilt when I don’t meet other people’s expectations.”

“I am learning to recognize my own worth and value.”

“It is ok to choose myself.”

“I get to define myself.”

“I realize that my own needs are important.”

“I am finding a balance between my own needs and helping others.”

“I am learning to take better care of myself.”

“It is ok to say no when I need to.”

“I accept myself as I am.”



4. Practice Distress Tolerance

Building awareness around people-pleasing patterns, practicing assertiveness, and focusing on your self-worth and self-esteem is bound to cause distressing emotions to arise. Here is a link to an excellent resource on 6 Distress Tolerance Skills.¹



¹ <https://sunrisertc.com/distress-tolerance-skills>



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