

Setting Boundaries

Green circle: this is to identify behaviour that focuses on our self care. This could be regular visits to the dentist, getting enough sleep, making time for a leisure activity that brings us joy, committing to our self development, staying solvent, exercise, personal grooming, picking up the phone to a friend/sponsor to keep regular connection, getting out into green space, keeping a gratitude list, doing service. This is a large area that can be expanded.

Amber circle: this is where we identify conditions that act as a warning to a potential boundary violation by ourselves or others. These triggers will be very personal; some suggestions could be staying late at work consecutive days, relying on lots of TV for distraction, gossiping, compulsive shopping...

This is also a good place for feelings and thoughts. If we can recognise that we're feeling tired, irritable, sad, angry, numb, confused etc. then we can make choices about how we respond. We can choose some green behaviour to help us to move away from reacting to our emotions and losing control and potentially straying into our red, unacceptable, behaviour. remember, feelings tell us about ourselves, they don't define who we are.

Red circle: this is where we identify behaviour for ourselves that is unacceptable. We can only control ourselves and it is knowing ourselves that will help us understand which behaviours of our own are unacceptable. It is acceptable to have feelings and thoughts. If we condemn our feelings and thoughts we are condemning the human side of our nature. Being angry is ok, it is a healthy emotion that can help instigate change. Throwing things when we're angry might be unacceptable to us so it goes in our red behaviour circle. Being subject to another's violence when they are experiencing anger might be unacceptable to us. Being around someone who is intoxicated might be unacceptable to us but we can only change where we are in relation to the other; we cannot prevent them from choosing an intoxicated state, but we can choose if we want to be around people who are intoxicated.

