

My Boundaries at Work and Social Events

Prepare a few words for an invitation or personal question before you are put on the spot. You decide what you want to share; this guide does not determine workplace rights or disclosure requirements.

Original response cards: choose your level of detail

Situation	Brief response	If the question continues
Someone offers a drink	No thanks. I would like sparkling water.	That is what I am having tonight.
A colleague asks about an appointment	I have an appointment at that time.	I would rather keep the details private. Can we talk about scheduling?
An invitation does not fit	I cannot make that event. Would you like to meet for lunch another day?	Thanks for inviting me; I am going to pass this time.
Someone asks for your recovery story	I am not ready to talk about that here.	I appreciate your concern. Let's change the subject.

These are optional scripts, not a test of assertiveness. Change the wording to sound like you. A different setting, activity or conversation may fit you better.

Separate an everyday answer from an official process

A short response to a coworker is different from a request for leave or an accommodation. If you need a formal change, ask the relevant office or adviser what process and information are required; this sheet does not supply employment-law advice.

Keep notes private. Write or type short notes. Use another copy if you need more room. Save and reopen the PDF to check your answers.

Prepare for one situation

The situation and what I want

Event, question or request; my preferred outcome.

My first response and a repeat

Two short lines I can actually say.

A practical arrangement

Transport, a different activity, a chosen companion or a scheduling request; what needs confirmation.

SAMHSA suggests telling a trusted person what kind of help you need. You could ask someone to change the subject, join an alternative activity, or be available for a conversation afterward. [1]

Original example: specific support

“Could you walk outside with me if I ask for a break?” is more actionable than “Make sure the evening goes well.” Ask first; a helper does not have to take responsibility for everyone’s behavior.

A way to leave or take a break

Decide what you will do if you want to stop the conversation or leave the event. Keep your own travel/contact arrangements available; My Recovery Support Map can hold the relevant number.

Sources and Further Reading

[1] [SAMHSA: How to Ask for Help](https://www.samhsa.gov/help) (samhsa.gov)