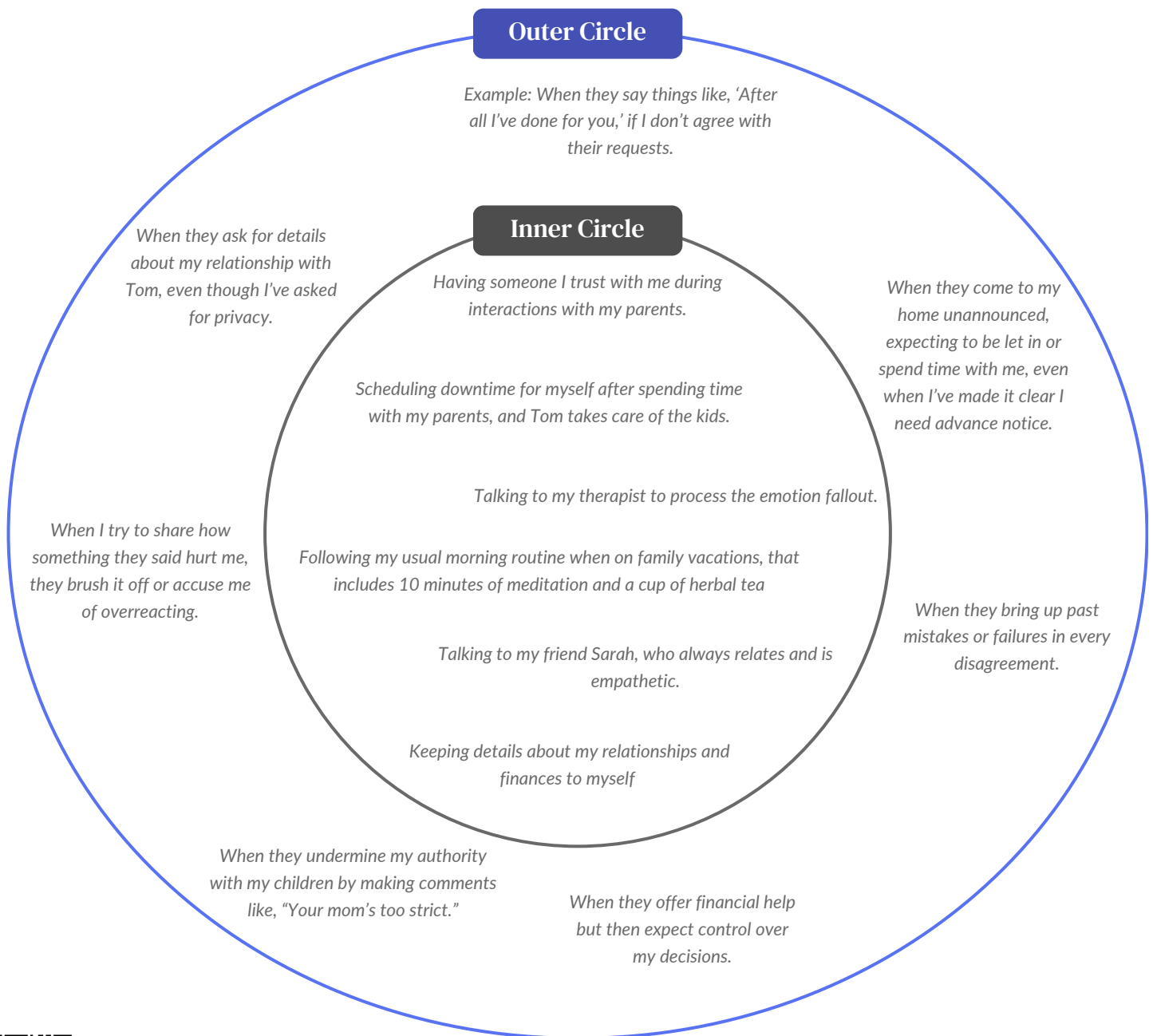


Setting boundaries with an unhealthy parent is essential for protecting your mental and emotional health. This worksheet is designed to help you identify where boundaries are needed, reflect on how these dynamics have impacted your life, and provide practical tools to communicate your needs assertively. Setting boundaries isn't about pushing your parent away—it's about defining what's acceptable in your life and ensuring that your emotional space is respected.

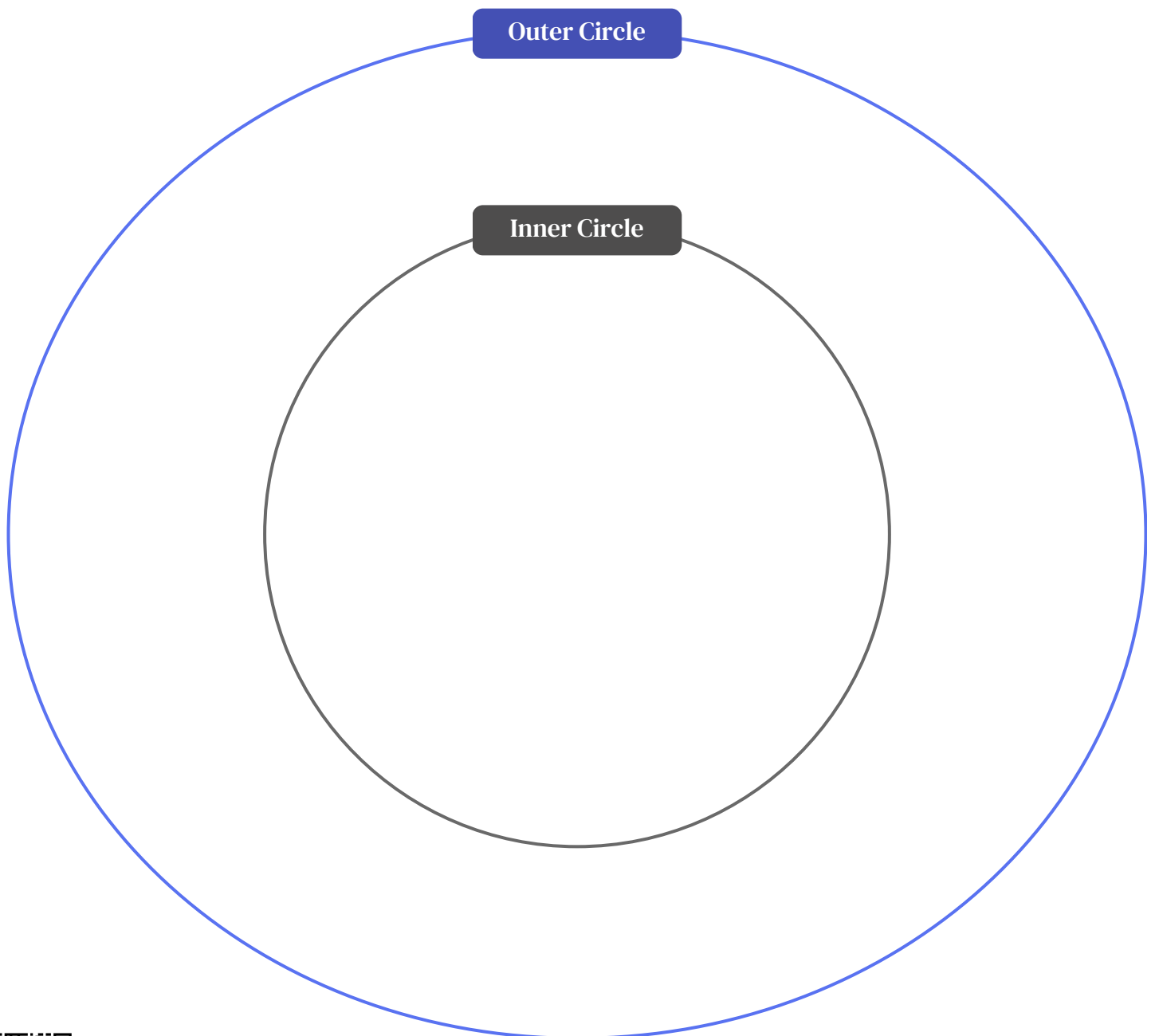
PART 1: Visualize Your Boundaries

Inside the circle, write everything that makes you feel relaxed and safe. On the outside of the circle, write down anything or anyone that makes you feel stressed, uncomfortable, or unsafe. These are people or situations that are pushing your boundaries and need further attention.



When filling out your inner and outer circle, here are some questions to consider:

- What boundaries do I currently have in place to protect my mental well-being around my parents?
- Who or what helps me feel understood, calmer, or safer when dealing with my parents?
- How do I take care of myself after difficult interactions with my parents?
- What specific behaviors from my parents make me feel disrespected or uncomfortable?
- What behaviors from my parents make me feel guilty, criticized, or ashamed?
- What types of conversations with my parents leave me feeling drained, anxious, or overwhelmed?
- In what ways do my parents try to control my decisions or push me to act against my own needs?



Scan to learn more about how
to set boundaries with parents.

PART 2: How to Establish Your Communication Boundaries

Here are some basic rules and examples for communicating your boundaries effectively.

Use Confident Body Language

Stand or sit up straight, maintain eye contact, and use firm but calm gestures to convey confidence and assertiveness.

Be Clear & Set Consequences

Be specific about what behavior you want to change and clearly state what will happen if your boundary is not respected.

Keep Your Tone Calm and Respectful:

Speak calmly and assertively, avoiding raised voices or aggressive tones to maintain a respectful atmosphere.

Practice Active Listening:

Listen to the other person's response without interrupting and acknowledge their perspective while staying firm on your boundary.

Verbal Boundaries

- "I need you to speak to me in a calm, respectful tone."
- "I need you to avoid using sarcasm."
- "I need you to focus on the issue at hand and not make personal attacks."
- "I need you to clearly and honestly communicate without being evasive."

Emotional Boundaries

- "I want to feel that my feelings are acknowledged and validated."
- "I want you to apologize if you hurt my feelings during the argument."
- "I need you to avoid using my vulnerabilities against me."
- "I want to take breaks when I start feeling overly emotional."

Physical/Time Boundaries

- "I will visit on weekends, but I need my weekday to focus on my own family and work."
- "I can't attend every family gathering, but I will make time for the ones that are most important."
- "If the conversation becomes disrespectful, I will leave or take a break."



PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries (Example Page)

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

Situation:

My mom often criticizes how I'm raising my kids, particularly when it comes to discipline and routines. She frequently makes comments like, "That's not how I raised you," or "You're too strict with them," especially during family gatherings. This makes me feel defensive, frustrated, and disrespected.

Boundary I will set:

I will tell my mom that I understand she has different parenting styles, but I need her to respect my choices. I will clearly state that I don't want her to offer unsolicited advice or criticize how I handle my children, especially in front of them. I will also explain that I will step away from conversations if the criticism continues.

Any potential challenges:

- My mom may feel hurt or defensive and accuse me of shutting her out or say something like, "I'm just trying to help."*
- She might continue to make comments despite my request, especially during stressful moments or in front of extended family members.*
- Other family members may get involved or try to defend her, putting pressure on me to ignore the issue to "keep the peace."*

How I will handle these challenges:

- I will remind myself that setting boundaries is important for my well-being and my relationship with my children, even if my mom feels upset at first.*
- If my mom continues to criticize, I will calmly disengage by stepping away from the conversation or leaving the room if necessary. I can say, "I'm not comfortable continuing this conversation right now."*
- If other family members intervene, I'll stay firm and explain that I'm handling the situation with my mom and don't need additional input. I will emphasize that respecting boundaries is important for healthy relationships.*



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Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

Situation:

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Boundary I will set:

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Any potential challenges:

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How I will handle these challenges:

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