

No Contact Decision Framework

Supporting Major Boundary Decisions

Overview

No contact is sometimes the healthiest choice, but it's a significant decision with lasting implications. This framework helps practitioners support clients in making and maintaining this decision when appropriate.

When No Contact May Be Appropriate

- Ongoing abuse that continues despite boundaries
- Contact consistently triggers significant distress or regression
- The relationship requires abandoning core values or needs
- Children need protection from harmful family members
- Previous attempts at limited contact have failed

Assessment Questions

- "What have you tried before cutting contact?"
- "How do you feel before, during, and after interactions with this person?"
- "What would need to change for the relationship to be healthy?"
- "Is change realistic given what you know about this person?"
- "What would staying in contact cost you long-term?"

Supporting the Decision

- Help client own the decision rather than making it for them
- Explore grief about the relationship they wished they had
- Prepare for family system reactions (hoovering, flying monkeys)
- Develop responses for social situations ("How's your mom?")
- Address guilt as a normal response, not evidence of wrong choice

Documentation Considerations

- Document client's reasoning for the decision
- Note pattern of harm that led to consideration
- Record less restrictive alternatives that were tried