



Core Clinical Services

North Bristol **NHS**
NHS Trust

The Pain Management Programme: Seven ways of saying no



Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered

Seven ways of saying No

Scenario: A friend is asking you to help them with the decorating this afternoon, and you can not help them at this time...

1. Saying no without apologising

The aim here is not to apologise, so don't begin any sentences with "I'm sorry..." or "I'm afraid..." The other person may have a problem but you do not have to let them give it to you...

Example

Friend: "Will you help me decorate this afternoon?"

You: "No, I've got to do the gardening this afternoon"

Friend: "Go on..."

You: "No I can't today"

Friend: "Please..."

You: "No, I can't".

2. Broken record

This technique can be used in a variety of different situations in which other people are being persistent or evasive. It involves repetition of your assertive

refusal (or request) each time other people try to persuade you otherwise etc. One of the advantages is that you do not have to think cleverly under pressure

Example

Friend: "Will you help me decorate this afternoon?"

You: "No, sorry I can't help you this afternoon"

Friend: "But I'm really looking forward to starting it"

You: "Yes, but I can't help you this afternoon"

Friend: "I've got to get it finished by Monday"

You: "Sorry, but I can't help you this afternoon"

3. Reflecting

This technique involves reflecting back the content and feeling of the request, but adding your assertive response at the end.

Example

Friend: "Will you help me decorate this afternoon?"

You: "I can see that you want to decorate this afternoon but I can't help you I am afraid"

Friend: "But I was really looking forward to starting it"

You: "I understand you were looking forward to it, but I can't help you this afternoon"

Friend: "I got to get it finished by Monday"

You: "I can see that you are anxious to finish it by Monday, but I can't help you today"

4. Reasoned "No"

This gives very briefly, the GENUINE reasons for saying NO. In the example this could mean giving an answer, something like...

- a) "I can't help you decorate this because I have to do my garden today"
- b) "I won't have time this afternoon because I need to get this garden finished". ETC

5. The raincheck "No"

This says "NO" to the present request, but leaves room for negotiation. In the above example it would be a response something like...

"I can't help you this afternoon, but I might be able to manage some time tomorrow"

6. Asking for information

- a) "Is there any other time apart from this afternoon when you could start the decorating?"
- b) "Why do you have to start this afternoon?"
- c) "Could you start today without me?"

7. Stalling for time

Only you can decide what is important enough to risk saying NO to. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to think quickly. A useful tip to gain time before saying NO is to say something like "I'm not sure/I need to look at my diary, can I get back to you?" If you use this strategy make sure you do get back to the person.

8. Simple "no"

This is simply to say "NO" and nothing else. One needs to take care when using this approach as it can be seen as aggressive. It is probably best used with a very persistent salesman or an unwanted caller at the door!

In the above example you would simply say "NO" every time the friend tried to persuade you to help them with the decorating that afternoon.

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How to contact us:



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If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.