

WORDS TO AVOID (AND WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD)



SHOULD

Why not? It can lead to shame, guilt, and stress, especially when expectations don't line up with reality.

What to replace it with: Using Could or Can offers a suggested action or path without creating a feeling of obligation.



BUT

Why not? It can negate or contradict what comes before it, generating negativity and possibly causing defensiveness.

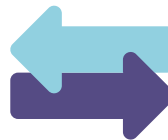
What to replace it with: The word And encourages positivity and requires a constructive addition to the thought.



MUST

Why not? Using the word "must" removes autonomy & decision-making power.

What to replace it with: For others, one option is... provides advice without obligation. For self-talk, saying I choose to... establishes control in making decisions.



ALWAYS & NEVER

Why not? Both convey extremes that likely don't exist & show disregard for the times when the situation was handled correctly.

What to replace it with: Don't exaggerate the frequency of an issue. Use Sometimes or stick to the solution versus the problem.



OBVIOUSLY

Why not? It adds nothing & can sound sarcastic. It discourages questioning & makes others feel ignorant or uninformed.

What to replace it with: Nothing. State the facts clearly. If something is obvious, it will be apparent without mentioning it.



JUST

Why not? When used as a qualifier, it diminishes what you say & implies it's not important. (This doesn't apply to other uses)

What to replace it with: Many people use it unconsciously as a way to be non-committal, so be aware of word choice.



SELFISH

Why not? It can discourage people, particularly women, from enforcing necessary boundaries. Don't use it against yourself or others to cause guilt.

What to Remember: It isn't selfish for someone (including yourself) to state their needs or say no to overcommitting.