

# Building Blocks of Resiliency: Setting Boundaries, Discovering Core Values, and the "NO" Word

## Transcript: U.S. Army Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness Outreach Webinar

*December 13, 2023*

Joy Ingram, RAFT Workshop Facilitator

**Lytaria Walker:**            [00:04](#)            Welcome to the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience, and Readiness outreach webinar for December. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. However, you may ask questions at any time by placing them in the Q&A box. There will be several opportunities for questions throughout the webinar, and we should have some time at the very end as well. Today's webinar has been approved for one hour of live Continuing Education Units. Participants must obtain CEU certification through their local Commanders by downloading the webinar presentation slides as attendance verification. The slides will be posted in the chat at the end of the webinar and emailed to registered participants. Please note that the views of DPRR outreach webinar presenters are their very own and are not endorsed by the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense. This month our guest is Joy Ingram.

**Lytaria Walker:**            [01:05](#)            Joy is a love superhero whose mission is to spread empathy, compassion, and understanding in a world often overshadowed by chaos and hatred. With her innate belief in the power of love to heal, Joy has a unique set of abilities that she uses to uplift and unite individuals through the strength of heartfelt connections. The way Joy sees it, love isn't just an emotion, it's a force that transcends barriers, unites souls, and transforms the world into a place of harmony and understanding. When she isn't crusading to help people plant love and spread happiness, Joy can usually be spotted on the beach sipping coffee and reading a really good book. Joy, thank you so much, ma'am, for joining us this morning. Please take it away.

**Joy Ingram:**                 [02:01](#)            Good morning, everyone. My name is Joy Ingram and I am a workshop facilitator for RAFT, the host of this webinar this morning. For those of you unfamiliar with RAFT, RAFT stands for Resilience for Advocates through Foundational Training. Our mission is to support organizations and advocates to cultivate human-centered workspaces through foundational wellness practices, resources, and training to build resilience and

promote a positive gender-based violence advocacy ecosystem. To make that plain and simple, RAFT is a group of advocates for advocates. Our founder came to understand that in the sexual and domestic violence advocacy field, a lot of advocates were burning out really quickly, and we don't want that. We want advocates to be working in the field for a long time in order to be able to help survivors. That's what RAFT is here to do.

Joy Ingam: [03:10](#)

A little history of RAFT; it was founded by Indrani Goradia in 2006. She had the mission of ending gender-based violence globally. She set out to do that, and what she found was that when it came to direct services, the wheel was already created. She didn't want to reinvent the wheel. What she found was that for the people who were already serving survivors, the field was difficult to continually work in. She decided that in order to support survivors, she would provide support to the frontline staff that was working to help survivors. And so RAFT was born.

Joy Ingam: [03:56](#)

Now for a brief overview of our team. We have Jeremy, our executive director. We have Sophie and Megan, our admins. Megan also does outreach with Miriam, and then Nicole and myself facilitate the workshops on a regular basis. We facilitate them all over the country, mostly virtual as we're all located in different parts of the country. Occasionally we'll go out to a conference and host a table and run workshops. I've been with RAFT for just about a year. In addition to working as an advocate for advocates, I also continue to work in direct client services for a small domestic and sexual violence resource agency in Virginia. I'm also a survivor of both domestic and sexual violence, which is what brought me to this work in the beginning. I'm passionate about helping survivors, and I'm passionate about helping those who help survivors so that we can be around for a really long time to continue to do this work.

Joy Ingam: [05:08](#)

Today we're going to do a mini workshop called Building Blocks to Resiliency: Setting Boundaries, Discovering Core Values, and the "NO" Word. This workshop is going to last one hour. Typically, our workshops last for about two hours, and the one we're doing today is actually a combination of two workshops, and you all will have the chance to sign up for the full workshop series, all of which are free to organizations. So just a few community guidelines: we want this to be interactive. We don't like to sit and just sort of preach and talk at people for an hour. Please drop your questions in the chat, use the reaction buttons. We do ask that if you share a story that relates to the topic we're talking about, that you keep it to a medium intensity. We don't want to overwhelm folks in this space so that you need an advocate when you leave the space.

- Joy Ingam: [06:24](#) So now we're going to do a quick grounding exercise; we start all of our workshops with these. It's a box breathing exercise to get you in a head space and ground you so that you can focus on this workshop. We know that in our jobs, a lot of times we're trying to handle five to ten different things at once and things can be overwhelming, and our mind gets cluttered. In this space, we like to start with the box breathing exercise so that you can clear the clutter in your mind and get into a good space to be able to do this. You're going to inhale for a count of four, then you'll hold that breath for a count of four. Next, you'll exhale for a count of four, and then you'll hold yourself empty for a count of four. We're going to repeat that for one minute, and then we'll get our workshop started.
- Joy Ingam: [08:43](#) The first thing we want to talk about in today's workshop are boundaries. What are boundaries? Nadia says, "where you start and others end." "Standards or limits." "A line between things that are okay and those that aren't." "A space that needs to be maintained for effective operations and advocacy." All of these relate to what boundaries are in different ways, they're all good examples.
- Joy Ingam: [10:05](#) So at RAFT we typically use Brené Brown's definition of boundaries, and she defines boundaries as "guidelines, rules, or limits created by a person for themselves that are reasonable, safe, and permissible ways for other people to treat them, as well as how they will respond when someone steps outside of those limits, their statements of what a person will or won't do, or what they do and do not like." Basically, a boundary defines and sets limits: what's okay, what's not okay, what you will and won't do. Thank you for your great answers.
- Joy Ingam: [10:55](#) There are different types of boundaries. We have physical boundaries that pertain to personal space, your personal bubble, and your privacy. When I think of a physical boundary, I like to think of my own personal bubble. I don't like people standing too close to me: "back up, why are you in my space?" Another physical boundary in domestic and sexual violence might be touch: the way a person touches you, or if they touch you at all. You set boundaries on how you like to be touched. I have a nephew, he's the cutest, most adorable thing, but he does not like to be hugged. Whenever I see him, I'll ask him, can I have a hug? Occasionally he says yes, and most of the time he just shakes his head no and runs off.
- Joy Ingam: [11:43](#) There are also psychological and mental boundaries. These pertain to a person's beliefs, emotions, and intuition. It's your right to have your feelings, thoughts, and opinions. When I think

a lot about psychological and mental boundaries, I think about people who suck the energy out of you. If someone invites you somewhere and you want to know who else is going. You may not want to go because there may be someone else that you just don't want to be around because they take your energy. Your spiritual boundaries pertain to self-esteem, your sense of identity, your faith, and protecting your right to believe what you want and who you are. A lot of spiritual boundaries are grounded in religious beliefs. It may be a boundary of you don't work on your sabbath day, or it may be a boundary around what you wear or what you do and don't eat, or other rituals that you do and don't do. All these are different types of boundaries, and we need to be aware of these for ourselves and for others.

Joy Ingam: [13:13](#)

There are four different types of psychological boundaries. A person with a soft boundary will merge other people's boundaries with their own. It's like not really having a boundary because you let people cross for whatever reason. If you say you have a boundary not working on your day off, but if someone asks you to work on your day off you just change what you said you don't do, and you just go along with it. People with soft boundaries are easily manipulated. Another type of psychological boundary is a rigid boundary, and a rigid boundary is like a brick wall, it just doesn't move.

Joy Ingam: [14:19](#)

A person with rigid boundaries is closed or walled off so that nobody can get close to them either physically or emotionally. These are usually based on bad previous experiences in a similar situation. Returning to the "I don't work on my day off" example, it might be a situation where someone previously had a job and working on their day off was always expected of them. People would call them when they were on vacation. If they were in the hospital sick themselves or visiting a loved one, they would call them and want them to do work, and it was expected, and they got pulled into doing a lot of things that went against their values and were outside of their boundaries, and so now it's just a hard no every time.

Joy Ingam: [15:11](#)

Another example are spongy boundaries, which is like having a combination of a soft and a rigid boundary, but you're not really in control of when that boundary is soft or when it's rigid: it's typically someone else that has the control of your boundaries. So someone with spongy boundaries may say, "you know, I don't work on my day off," but depending on who calls and and what they say when they call they may give in and work anyway. Again, it may be a situation of they don't want to do it or it may not necessarily be the best thing for them at the time,

but because this person has called and asked in a certain way, then they just acquiesce.

Joy Ingam: [16:05](#)

The final type of boundary is a flexible boundary, and this is the best type of boundary to have because you can't always say no to things. This is a boundary that's a combination of soft and rigid, but where the person who sets the boundary knows that they are in control of when they will and when they won't let something cross their boundary. A person with a flexible boundary of not doing work when they're off might say "well, I typically don't work when I'm off, but I don't have anything else occupying my time right now, so yeah, I'll do it." Or maybe, "I want to help you all out right now, but I'm busy doing this instead." The person setting the boundary is the one who makes the decision about whether or not it changes, so they're in control.

Joy Ingam: [17:05](#)

Now that we've talked about boundaries a little, let's move on to values. How do you define your personal values? Also, think of some of your personal values. "I value my peace; a lot of times I don't do things that jeopardize my peace." "Beliefs, friends, families, morals." Brittany says "values are things that I live my everyday life by." "Things I want people to think about when they think of me." "That all people are important and valuable." There are a lot of different values that we're focusing on in this group, good.

Joy Ingam: [18:42](#)

We define values as "any idea or theme that is important enough to you that it affects how you think, how you act, and how you feel." I think all of the things listed affect how we think, how we act, and how we feel. Our peace, our family, our friends, our mental health, being a person of integrity: all of these things affect how we think, act, and feel, so they are our values. How do our values affect our lives? They're the foundations of laws, customs, and traditions. They reflect our sense of right or wrong, they influence our attitudes and our behaviors, and they give our lives purpose, meaning, and passion. When we think of the foundations and laws of our country, we think of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. All these things are values that our country is based on. They reflect our sense of right and wrong: if honesty is a value to you, then you feel like it's wrong to lie to people and to deceive people. They influence your attitudes and your behaviors. A person of integrity doesn't do certain things. A person who cares about other people doesn't do certain things to other people because they care about them. It gives your life purpose, meaning, and passion. These values are the basis for a lot of our boundaries that we set with other people.

- Joy Ingam: [20:28](#) Now we're going to use our boundaries and our values, and we're going to tie them into Saying "No" in a Positive Way. But before we talk about Saying "No" in a Positive Way, we want to look at ways that we are currently saying no. So according to William Ury, who is the author of "The Power of a Positive No," most people currently respond to requests in three ways. The first way is that they accommodate: not saying no at all, they just go along to get along. They may not want to do it, but they're going to do it. In that situation, in order to maintain a relationship, the person gives away their power, and prioritizes the wants and the desires of the other person.
- Joy Ingam: [21:32](#) For instance, if someone asks you to work late, you don't think about what it is you want or need, you just say "yeah, I'll do it." You accommodate even when you want to say no. You may do it with a bit of a lackluster attitude, but you accommodate the request. The next way is to attack the person: "I can't believe you even asked me that. Why would you ask me that? Why don't you find somebody else to do? What's your problem, you can't do it?" We go on the attack, we go on the offensive, instead of just saying no.
- Joy Ingam: [22:17](#) In that situation, we jeopardize our relationships with other people in an effort to maintain our power. In the third way, instead of saying no we avoid. You may get an email about working an extra shift or staying late, and instead of responding and saying, "no, I can't do that," or "no, I don't want to do that," we just avoid it. We let that email sit in our inbox, or we delete it and pretend we didn't see it, or we just don't respond to it. In situations like that, a lot of times you'll lose both your power and the relationship with that person. So instead of doing this, we want to learn to say no and say it in a positive way.
- Joy Ingam: [23:23](#) This is where we're going to bring in our boundaries and our values and use those to our advantage. When saying no in a positive way, we call it the "yes no yes" because basically you first say yes, and then you say no, and then after that you can say a different yes if you like, but it's not necessary. The first yes we're going to say is to our values and our boundaries.
- Joy Ingam: [24:19](#) Back to the example of picking up an extra shift, staying late, or coming in on your day off: you don't want to do it. How do you say no to the request? The first thing you do is you say yes to yourself and your values, and thus first you have to know your values. That's why we like to do these exercises where we identify our values. For instance, if I were asked, "Hey, can you pick up this hotline shift tonight?" I would say yes to my value of maintaining my peace. Going back to flexible boundaries, there

are some days when, yes, I can do it, it's okay, it's fine. I know I've worked all day, but it wasn't a bad day, I can do it.

Joy Ingam: [25:10](#) But on days when I have been stressed out on the job from nine to five, I'm not trying to go in from 8:00 PM and cover a hotline until 8:00 AM. It's just not the thing because it affects my mental health. In saying yes to my peace, I can then give a firm and resounding "No" to working the hotline that night. Then after that, because I've said yes to myself and no to the hotline, the second possible "yes" (that is only an option: I don't have to give it, I don't have to offer it) is that I can't work the hotline tonight, but be sure to ask me for the next shift that you need coverage. Or if you need coverage this weekend, I can do it then.

Joy Ingam: [26:19](#) That's how we do the "yes, no, yes." You can use this in your personal life and you can use this method in your professional life. I have a niece that likes to call or text me and ask me to borrow money that she's never going to pay me back, and I know she's never going to pay it back. There are some times when yes, I'll give her the money because I just love my nieces and I have it. But then there are times when I have to say no because I value my ability to pay my own bills, and there are other times when I say no because I don't want her to make a habit of just asking for money when she needs it. I want her to become a self-sufficient and self-sustainable adult. To be able to do that, she's going to have to find other means of getting money when she needs it, besides calling her auntie and asking for it.

Joy Ingam: [27:21](#) Empower your no. Sometimes when you give a person a "no," they may not accept your "no," they may not accept your second "yes," they may not accept your values, but when you empower your "no," you're going to stand by your decision to say, it's not a counter offer of "no, but," it's just a no. You have to say it with the full understanding of any consequences and repercussions that may come from you saying no, but you still stand on them independent of what the other person decides to do or how they feel or how they react. Sometimes that may mean that you may have to end relationships with certain people, or you may have to put that relationship on the back burner and let it cool off for a while, or it may mean leaving an agency or changing the type of work that you do.

Joy Ingam: [28:27](#) That's fine, but we have to learn to take care of ourselves. I know, for instance, with direct services, it can be really grueling. A lot of us want to be advocates, we want to work in advocacy, we want to do prevention and things like that, but it can be

very, very grueling. What I found in doing this work is that advocacy doesn't always mean direct services. Helping people in different ways doesn't always mean just doing one thing to help them. There are many different ways that you can advocate. There are many different ways that you can help. So you have to know how to set your boundaries, know your values, and be able to say no, and stand firm on your no.

Joy Ingam: [29:13](#)

While "yes no yes" does seem very simple, saying no takes practice. Are any of you out there people pleasers? I'm a reformed people pleaser. I always want to help folks and do what they want. I don't want to ruffle any feathers. After so many years of life and people taking advantage of me and it not really serving me at all, I've had to learn to stop trying to please people all the time. "No" was kind of hard for me, and I think it'll take practice. I had to learn to say no to my niece. That's hard for me because I love my niece and I want to make her happy, and I don't like it when she's upset. At the same time you have to decide what you value.

Joy Ingam: [30:08](#)

I value her becoming a self-sustainable woman and being able to do things for herself, so I can't always give in to what she wants. I value my peace, so I can't always give in to an expectation of I'll cover a hotline or I'll work on a weekends. Understand that no, even though this seems so simple, takes practice, and sometimes you won't always get it right. There are times when I do still find myself accommodating or avoiding. (I don't usually attack anymore). Remember that you have to practice using this, and sometimes you won't get it right, but you'll live another day to try it again.

Joy Ingam: [31:01](#)

RAFT is here to offer advocates the support that you all need to navigate compassion fatigue and burnout. Our sole purpose is to help advocates. We do that in a number of different ways. The main way that we do that is through a series of workshops. There's the Building Blocks for Resilience workshops. It's a series of five workshops. The first one is the Importance of Personal Boundaries. The next one is Discovering Your Values and Saying No in a Positive Way. This mini workshop is a combination of those two. In those workshops we delve a lot deeper into these things, and we give you time to talk amongst yourselves, and journal, and discuss different things, and play out different scenarios. Then there's the Resilience to Shame, Strengths in Decision Making, and Building a Resilient Life.

Joy Ingam: [32:07](#)

I think all of those are great workshops. I took all of them as part of the team of my direct services agency long before I came and started working for RAFT. Those were my introduction to



RAFT, and I really enjoyed them. I really found them useful and helpful in my advocacy work and in maintaining my own mental health while doing this advocacy work. The other thing that RAFT has right now to support advocates and their agencies are monthly support calls. We have an advocate support call that's for anyone in a field that identifies as an advocate for victims of domestic sexual violence. It doesn't matter if you do direct services, if you're an attorney, if you're a cop: if you identify as an advocate, those calls are for you. We also have survivor advocate support calls.

Joy Ingam: [33:05](#) That call is specifically designed for advocates who also identify as survivors, because in doing the work, we found that there are a lot of advocates who also identify as survivors. Sometimes these things are not taken into consideration when we're looking at this field. That seems crazy, but that's the way it's been. We are trying to make more space for people to bring their whole selves to the advocacy field. Then there are two other calls: one is for emerging leaders and one is for directors of agencies, to help them be better leaders and to help them help their advocates better. We invite you to sign up for any and all of these. You can sign up on our website at [raftcares.org](http://raftcares.org), or you can shoot us an email at [info@raftcares.org](mailto:info@raftcares.org). That brings us to the end of this workshop, we thank you for coming out. Thank you for paying attention. We're on all the social media, so please stay connected with us. You can check us out again at [raftcares.org](http://raftcares.org), send us an email at [info@raftcares.org](mailto:info@raftcares.org), and we are on Facebook and Instagram at [raftcares](https://www.facebook.com/raftcares). If you have any questions right now, please feel free to drop them in the chat.

Lytaria Walker: [34:34](#) Thank you, Joy, for this awesome presentation this morning. We will now take a few questions from the audience. If you would like to ask a question or if you have a comment, please type your question or comment in the Q&A box at this time, and we will read them out loud. There will be a short delay before the first question is announced. The presentation slides will be posted in the chat box at the end of the webinar, and they will also be emailed to registered participants so that you may obtain your one hour of ECU at this time. Please drop your questions or comments in the chat box or in the Q&A box for Joy.

Joy Ingam: [35:25](#) I see the first comment: "In the workplace "no" doesn't always mean you're not a team player. It could be a healthy boundary to decrease burnout. I've definitely had to learn that over the years." A lot of times people try to make that a thing: "well if you say no, you're not a team player." I am a team player. That's why I'm here on this team. That's why I'm not doing individual independent consulting and I'm working with an agency. I am a

team player, but you have to keep each piece of the team well in order for the team to function. Sometimes that may mean that someone has to say no. When you think of a sports team, you don't have all the players on the team on the field or the court at one time. Sometimes you have to let people rest so that they can come back better and continue to do their job. Thank you for pointing that out.

Joy Ingam: [36:31](#) "Without self-care, you cannot give good care to others." That's very correct, and RAFT is working on a workshop to present later in 2024 that's all about self care and why it's so important. A lot of times in spaces like these advocates get so caught up in wanting to help everyone else, that we put ourselves on the back burner. We want to help our clients, we want to help our family and friends, we want to help the boss, we want to help the team, and then we neglect ourselves. And what happens is that when you get so overwhelmed and so sick and so burnt out that you can't do anything, then you can't help yourself and you can't help others either.

Joy Ingam: [37:24](#) "Does RAFT work with NOVA, the National Organization for Victim Advocates?" I believe we are, but I'm new to the team. That's probably more of a question for our executive director, but I'll reach out to him and ask about NOVA. "What is the best way to teach a well-meaning supervisor to respect flexible boundaries. This is a person that is overreaching due to situational requirements or ignorance, not toxic traits." I'm grateful for that question because a lot of times you do have well-meaning people who don't know how to do something well. I'm glad that you're able to see and understand that it's not due to being a toxic person, it's just that they need better training. I think one of the ways that we could do that is to have them sign up for some of our workshops, send them an email with the link they could get on the support calls that our executive director Jeremy does. He talks to leaders about how to respect flexible boundaries and still be able to run an organization well. Sometimes people don't know how to find the balance in doing that.

Lytaria Walker: [39:05](#) Joy, can you talk a bit about how people are currently saying no? I read somewhere something about the three A's.

Joy Ingam: [39:12](#) We talked about the three A's: Accommodate, Attack, and Avoid. That's the way a lot of us say no because most of us find no to be a difficult thing. Nobody really wants to tell someone else "no," especially with the way society conditions us from children that we're not supposed to say no, we're supposed to say yes, especially to people we see as authority figures. We're

not allowed to say no. A lot of times to avoid saying no, because we're not comfortable doing it, the first way we do is we just accommodate, we sacrifice what it is we want, what makes us feel the best, what might be best for us, and we just accommodate that person's request. The second A is to attack. Instead of saying no in a positive way, and just simply saying, "no, I'm unable to do that, or I can't do it," we attack the person and we go on a tirade about why they asked us to do this and how dare they, and we get upset and we get offended and we become offensive.

Joy Ingam: [40:25](#)

That really doesn't work either. And the third way is that we avoid saying no to people. We simply avoid the request, we don't acknowledge it, therefore we don't acknowledge them. That's not good because it makes us seem rude and uncaring, and in the advocacy field, we can't do that with our clients, we can't do that with our supervisors. Supervisors can't do it with the subordinate staff. It's just not good business either way around.

Lytaria Walker: [41:07](#)

One last question from me, and we're still taking questions from the listeners, so if you have a question, please leave it in the Q&A box or in the chat box. What exercises might individuals do to practice a positive no? How can we do that?

Joy Ingam: [41:29](#)

I would say that one way might be to get in a group with some folks that you know, maybe some people that you work with and just talk about why you may find it hard to say no. What may be some barriers to you saying no? What's difficult about saying no? Also, think about situations where you wanted to say no but you didn't. Think about how it made you feel, think about what the outcome was, think about if you'd done it differently, maybe if you've been able to say a positive no, how it might have turned out better. And then just practice.

Joy Ingam: [42:21](#)

If this same situation were to arise now, think about how you could say no. What would be the values and the boundaries that you would stand on when saying yes to yourself? How would you actually say no? It can be as simple as saying no, because no is a complete sentence. No, sir. No, ma'am. No, I don't think that would be good for me. No, that's not what I want to do. No, that goes against my beliefs. There are different ways to say no, but you have to be able to say no. Practice these things because it takes time. Journal about it, writing it out, talking to other people about your needs and why you don't want to do certain things.

Lytaria Walker: [43:14](#) Those are very good tips. Thank you for sharing. Are there any other questions? Please drop your questions or comments in the chat box at this time.

Joy Ingam: [43:24](#) You can pretend you're a three-year-old because they have no problem saying no to whatever

Lytaria Walker: [43:28](#) That's very true.

Joy Ingam: [43:33](#) No to bedtime, no to broccoli, no to shoes, no to hugs. They don't have a problem with saying no.

Lytaria Walker: [43:42](#) So channel your inner three-year-old.

Joy Ingam: [43:44](#) Yes.

Lytaria Walker: [43:56](#) We will drop the presentation slides in the chat box at this time. Also, all registered participants will receive the slides via email later this afternoon. You must submit the slides to your supervisor to receive credit. If there are no more questions, we will conclude this morning's webinar. I want to extend a gracious thank you to Joy for joining us today. I also want to thank you listeners for joining today's webinar.

Joy Ingam: [44:37](#) Thank you all so much for having me. This has been great.

Lytaria Walker: [44:40](#) Once the webinar ends, you will be prompted to complete a survey. We appreciate your feedback as this helps us to improve upon future webinars. If you'd like to receive invitations for DPRR webinars and receive the latest news and information from the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience, and Readiness, please go to DPRR'S website at [armyresilience.army.mil](http://armyresilience.army.mil) and sign up for notifications there. Thank you for joining us today and have a wonderful rest of your day.