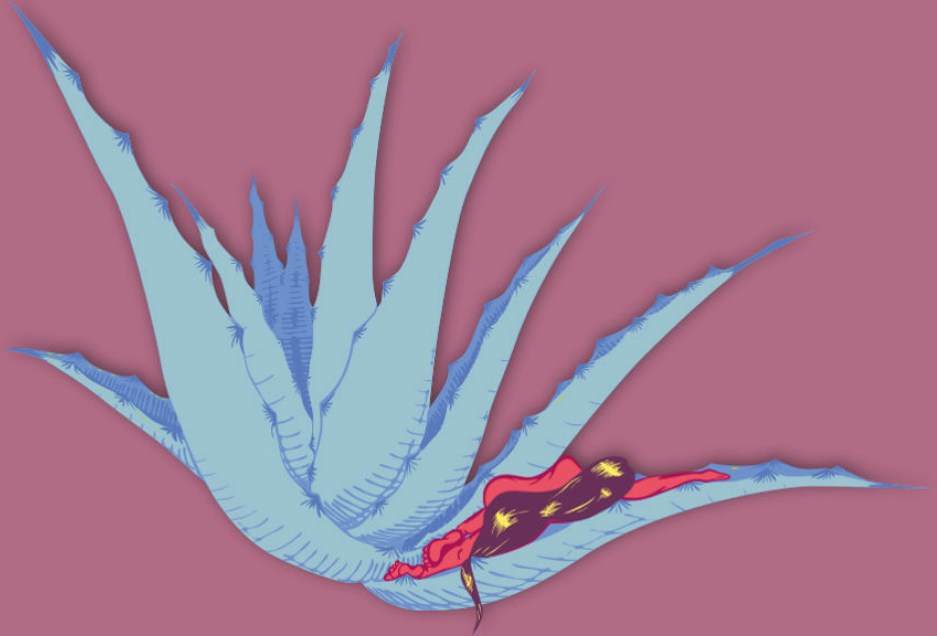




# CYBERWOMEN



**Self-care**

The act of NO

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# The act of NO

- **Objective(s):** Reflection opportunity for women to think about on the burdens placed on them - as women, human rights defenders, or activists – and how they can better justify for themselves the need for self-care.
- **Length:** 10-15 minutes
- **Format:** Exercise
- **Skill level:** Basic
- **Required knowledge:**
  - None required
- **Related sessions/exercises:**
  - None
- **Needed materials:**
  - Honesty and Sensitivity
- **Recommendations:** Self-care is an essential part of a holistic digital security practice, and is important to consistently reinforce and encourage – it is highly recommended that you distribute exercises from this module throughout your training. some women may not feel comfortable telling their stories (see below), in which case they can instead tell the story of a friend, sister, or co-worker.

## Leading the exercise

1. Introduce the exercise by talking with the group about the pressures that society often places on women – societal and cultural norms dictate that women must work two or three times as hard as men to prove their self-worth, for example.
2. Talk about how women human rights defenders face even more burdens – work overloads, self-guilt for failing to meet deadlines or accomplish goals, and being expected to take care of others' needs before their own are just a few examples.
3. Now, explain that with this exercise, participants will have an opportunity to reflect on the burdens they carry with them. Start by organizing the group into pairs.
4. Ask each pair to tell each other a story about a time they wanted to say NO, but didn't or couldn't – this could be a time they wanted to say no to extra work, or to a request for a favor, to spend time with a loved one or to fulfill another commitment. You can start by telling a story of your own, from a time when you wanted to say NO – for example:
  - I had planned a dinner with several friends, but while I was at work I was asked to stay late to resolve a problem that had arisen with an important project. I couldn't say NO, but I really, really wanted to.
5. Once each pair finishes, tell them that they will now re-tell their stories to each other; however, this time, they will change their stories as if they had actually said NO.
6. Tell participants that, if they wish, when they tell these alternative versions of their stories they can include how they would have explained (to their boss, colleague, or whoever was making the request of them) the reason why they are saying NO. This is not required, but it can be healthy reflection on the importance of making time for themselves.