

# In the ZONE

Sometimes, it's our thought patterns that prevent us from seeking help when we need it. We all have an internal voice that tells us we "shouldn't" or "couldn't" ask for what we need. This voice of fear and discomfort often prevents us from doing what is best for ourselves and our families.

This activity seeks to uncover those unproductive internal dialogues that can prevent people from asking for help.

Using the "Getting Out of Your Comfort Zone" worksheet, talk with parents about what obstacles they put in their own way that prevent them from asking for help when they or their family needs it.



## Describing this activity to families

In order to get the things we need, we have to step out of our comfort zone. Our comfort zone is the place where everything is familiar and easy. Asking for help is not easy. It comes with a lot of judgement – both self-judgement and judgement from others. Being aware of what keeps us from stepping out of our comfort zone is the first step to getting what we need.

*"Sometimes in life, you can fall down holes you can't climb out of by yourself. That's what friends and family are for – to help. They can't help, however, unless you let them know you're down there." – Meg Cabot*

## Why this activity?

Asking for help takes us out of our comfort zone. It requires us to first admit we do not have all the answers. We may believe asking for help is a sign of weakness and inadequacy. Asking for help may make us feel vulnerable and exposed, especially if asking for help in the past has led to guilt, shame or abuse. We may not feel we are worthy of help, that our problems are the result of our own bad choices and, therefore, we must "fix" it on our own.

When people we work with have been exposed to trauma or have high ACEs, their brains are trained to stay on "high alert" for danger. Asking for help can signal this danger alert.

When we can frame asking for help as a strength rather than a weakness, we are more likely to ask for the help we need before a crisis occurs. Helping those we serve rewrite their narrative about asking for help can provide a necessary avenue to building protection and strength in their families.

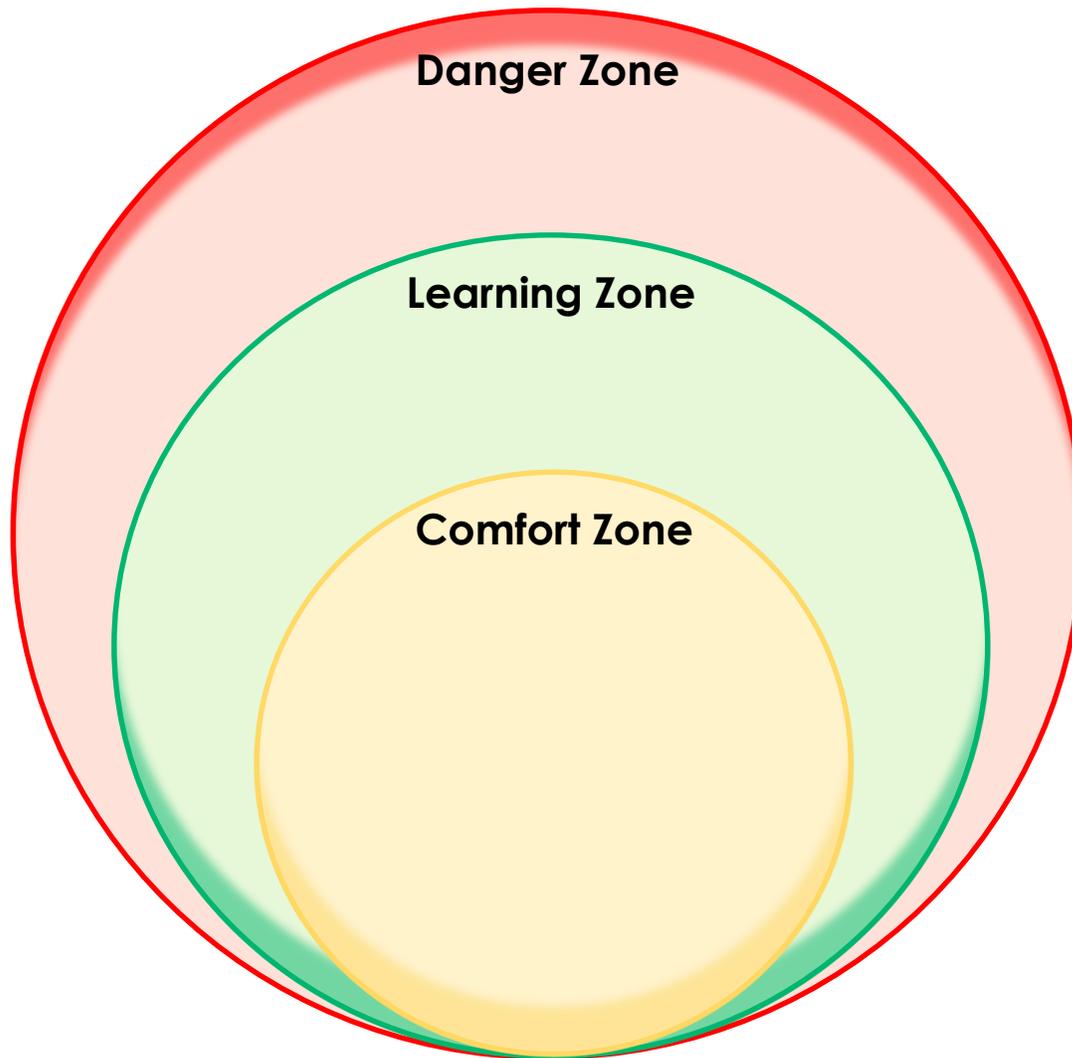


## Flourishing Further

Discuss how the parent would like to teach their children to ask for help when they need it. For example, they can use the simple phrase "do you want to try it yourself or do you want to ask for help?" with any new learning experience for their child to normalize asking for help.

# Getting Out of Your Comfort Zone

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**Comfort Zone**—When you're in your Comfort Zone, what do you tell yourself about needing or getting help?

Write those words or phrases in the yellow circle. (examples: I don't really need help; I don't want to owe anyone, I can't trust anyone)

**Learning Zone**—Where in your life right now would you or your family benefit from a little extra help and support?

Write those situations in the green circle. When you can step outside of your comfort zone, especially to gain support and help you need, you learn more about yourself, your family and your support networks.

Now, choose one situation from the green zone. **What advice would you give your best friend if he or she was in this situation? Where would you tell them to go for help?** We often view others asking for help in a kinder way than we view ourselves when we need help. How can we use this perspective to change our thoughts?

**Danger Zone**—Where do you feel unsafe asking for help? Who do you feel unsafe asking for help? Why?

Write those words or phrases in the red circle. The Danger Zone is where we feel unsafe. It is when our "high alert" alarm bells are going off. Past experiences may have made you feel unsafe asking for help. When you're aware of how these experiences have changed your thinking, you can start changing the thoughts that are stopping you from getting help when you need it.