WHAT ARE PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Boundaries *are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. A person with healthy boundaries can say "no" to others when they want to, but are also comfortable opening themselves up to intimacy and close relationships.*

A person who always keeps others at a distance (whether emotionally, physically, or otherwise) is said to have ***rigid boundaries****. Alternatively, someone who tends to get too involved with others has* ***porous boundaries.***

RIGID BOUNDARIES

Avoids intimacy and closeness.

Unlikely to ask for help.

Has few close friends.

Very protective of personal information.

May seem detached.

Keeps others at a distance to avoid rejection.

POROUS BOUNDARIES

Overshares personal information.

Difficulty saying "no" to requests.

Overinvolved in others' problems.

Dependent on the opinions of others.

Accepting of abuse or disrespect.

Fears rejection if they do not comply with others.

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Values own opinions.

Doesn't compromise values.

Shares personal information in an appropriate way (doesn't over or under share).

Knows personal wants and needs, and is able to communicate them.

Accepting when others say "no" to them.

WHAT TO SAY

You always have the right to say "no". When doing so, express yourself clearly and without ambiguity so there is no doubt about what you want.

"I'M NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THIS"

"THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE"

"I CAN'T DO THAT FOR YOU"

"PLEASE DON'T DO THAT TO ME"

"THIS DOESN'T WORK FOR ME"

"I'M DRAWING THE LINE AT ------"

"I DON'T WANT TO DO THAT"

"I'VE DECIDED NOT TO"

"NOT THIS TIME"

WHAT TO DO

USE CONFIDENT BODY LANGUAGE

Face the other person, make eye contact, and use a steady tone of voice at an appropriate volume (not too quiet, not too loud).

BE RESPECTFUL

Avoid yelling, using put-downs, or giving the silent treatment. Be firm, but your message will be better received if you are respectful.

PLAN AHEAD

Think about what you want to say, and how you will say it, before entering a difficult discussion. This can help you feel more confident about your position.

COMPROMISE

When appropriate, listen and consider the needs of the other person. You never *have* to compromise, but give-and-take is part of any healthy relationship.

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TYPES OF BOUNDARIES

Physical boundaries refer to personal space and physical touch. Healthy physical boundaries include an awareness of what's appropriate, and what's not, in various settings and types of relationships (hug, shake hands, or kiss?). Physical boundaries may be violated if someone touches you when you don't want them to, or when they invade your personal space (for example, rummaging through your bedroom).

Intellectual boundaries refer to thoughts and ideas. Healthy intellectual boundaries include respect for others' ideas and an awareness of appropriate discussion (should we talk about the weather, or politics?). Intellectual boundaries are violated when someone dismisses or belittles another person's thoughts or ideas.

Emotional boundaries refer to a person's feelings. Healthy emotional boundaries include limitations on when to share, and when not to share, personal information. For example, gradually sharing personal information during the development of a relationship, as opposed to revealing everything to someone. Emotional boundaries are violated when someone criticizes, belittles, or invalidates another person's feelings.

Sexual boundaries refer to the emotional intellectual, and physical aspects of sexuality. Healthy sexual boundaries involve more than mutual understanding and respect of limitations and desires between sexual partners. Sexual boundaries can be violated with unwanted sexual touch, pressure to engage in sexual acts, leering, or sexual comments.

Material boundaries refer to money or possessions. Healthy material boundaries involve setting limits on what you will share, and with whom. For example, it may be appropriate to lend a car to a family member, but probably not to someone you met this morning. Material boundaries are violated when someone steals or damages another person's possessions, or when they pressure them to give or lend them their possessions.

Time boundaries refer to how a person uses their time. To have healthy time boundaries, a person must set aside enough time for each facet of their life such as work, relationships, and hobbies. Time boundaries are violated when another person demands too much of another's time.

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