

What Are Boundaries?

Boundaries are ways to express or define our comfort levels, values, and needs. They support respect, communication, and emotional safety in relationships.



Types of Boundaries:

1 Mental Boundaries

- Freedom to have your own thoughts, values, and opinions.
 - "I respect your perspective, but I see things differently."

2 Emotional Boundaries

- How emotionally available you are to others.
- Saying no to being blamed for others' feelings, needing space when overwhelmed.
 - "I want to support you, but I'm feeling overwhelmed."

3 Material Boundaries

- Monetary decisions, giving or lending to others.
- Lending or sharing money or possessions.
 - "I already lent you money last week, so not again right now."



4 Physical Boundaries

- Privacy, personal space, your body.
- Respecting personal space, touch, or consent.
 - "I don't like being hugged unexpectedly."

5 Time Boundaries

- How much time you spend with someone or doing something.
- Balancing time alone and with others.
 - "I can only stay for 30 minutes."



6 Internal Boundaries

- Managing your time, energy, and emotions.
- Holding yourself accountable without self-shaming
 - "I have been social all week; I need the weekend to myself."



7 Digital Boundaries

- Privacy with phones/socials, consent to share content.
 - "I don't share my passwords to my socials."

How to Set Boundaries:

Use a simple checklist or "3 C's":

- Communicate Clearly
- Consistently Uphold Your Limits
- Check in with Yourself and Others

Example phrase bank:

"I feel _____ when _____.
I need _____."



Elements of Boundaries vs Abuse:

What boundary crossing might feel like:

- You feel drained, anxious, or resentful after interactions
- You feel pressured to say "yes" when you want to say "no"
- You notice your needs are consistently ignored or minimized

What if Someone Doesn't Respect My Boundary?

- Repeat your boundary calmly
- Remove yourself from the situation if needed
- Talk to a trusted support person
- **Remember:** You're not responsible for others' reactions

Note: Guilt-tripping, ignoring instead of talking, getting upset or even angry, control and manipulation are tactics to convince or coerce the other person to change their behaviour. These are not contributors of effective boundaries.



Remember, You can change your boundaries any time. Equitable relationships respect both people's needs. Setting boundaries isn't selfish – it's healthy. Enforce boundaries when you need to.

More Information:

Neighbours, Friends and Families:
www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca

Sexual Assault Centre of Brant:
www.sacbrant.ca



Neighbours, Friends & Families

Western
Centre for Research & Education on
Violence Against Women & Children