

# Module 1 - Understanding and Communicating Our Boundaries

## Learn more about your boundaries

It can seem difficult or even impossible sometimes to set boundaries with those we care about. We fear that we are being unkind or mean when we close off to our friends, partners, and family members. But being clear and open about our boundaries can actually help us have stronger and healthier relationships at work, at home, and in all of our social circles. As we make an effort to share and respect boundaries across our relationships, we can experience lower levels of stress and higher self-esteem, become more confident in our relationships, and learn to trust ourselves and others.

So what are your boundaries? Here are a few questions you can ask yourself to identify some of them. Grab a pen and paper and take some time to answer these for yourself. (It's journaling time!)

- What and who makes me feel safe and supported in my life?
- How do I like to spend my time, and who do I want to share it with? How do I feel when my decisions about my time are not respected?
- What does it feel like when someone posts a photo of me online without asking me beforehand?
- How do I feel when someone asks me about topics that I do not want to discuss or that make me uncomfortable? Do I feel capable of telling them to stop?
- What do I consider to be "my personal space"? How does it feel when my personal space is not respected?

Your answers can help you determine what you are comfortable – or uncomfortable – with and help you put your feelings into clear words.

You can use your answers to set both soft boundaries and firm boundaries:

- A soft boundary may be determined by context and can depend on the people around you or the situation itself. Soft boundaries are not always enforced, as you may sometimes be okay when they are crossed, or you may not point it out to the other person.
- A firm boundary is fixed. Having that line crossed in any situation or by anyone always makes you uncomfortable. Firm boundaries stay consistent regardless of the people around you or the situation you are in.

Even if you decide to keep your answers private, this can be a very helpful exercise to get to know yourself better!



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