

Healthy Boundaries

Clarifying what you are responsible for, what you can request, and what you can choose not to carry.

What a boundary is

A boundary describes what you will do to protect your time, safety, energy, values, or responsibilities. It is different from controlling what another person is allowed to feel or choose.

Boundary examples

- “I can talk about this when we are both calm.”
- “I am not available after 8 p.m.; I will respond tomorrow.”
- “If yelling starts, I will end the conversation and return later.”
- “I cannot take responsibility for that task, but I can help you think through options.”

Why boundaries feel difficult

- Fear of conflict, rejection, or being seen as selfish.
- Family or work cultures that reward overfunctioning.
- Past experiences where saying no felt unsafe.
- Guilt when another person is disappointed.

Practice

A boundary becomes real through consistent behavior. Start with clear, respectful language and follow through on what is within your control.

Try this reflection

Where are you saying yes while hoping someone notices that you mean no?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.