

BOUNDARY-SETTING

Hello everyone,

Thanks for being here today. My name is Sadaf and I'm a predoctoral intern at the UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services or CAPS. I mentioned in the past two videos that I know these are really challenging times in so many different ways. And again, we are putting these videos together as brief introductions to hopefully longer conversations with you. In this specific video, I'll briefly cover how to practice setting personal boundaries in relationships. I'll also share resources you can reach out if it is not safe to set boundaries.

So, let's start with what boundaries are. Boundaries are basically guidelines, rules, or limits that we can create to help clarify for other people how they need to behave towards us and how we will respond if they pass or cross those rules or limits. For example, I may tell my friends not to contact me after 10pm on weekdays unless there is an emergency. If they do contact me when it is not urgent, I will not respond until the next day when I'm available again.

Sometimes it can be difficult to identify what our boundaries are. In these cases, it's helpful to use our feelings to identify our needs and limits. For example, I am aware that I feel tired after 10pm and so I can help use that feeling to set a boundary of not being contacted after 10. Other examples may include you realizing that when someone raises their voice to convey a message to you, instead of listening you feel fearful and shut down or want to attack back. In this case, you can use your feeling (i.e., fear) of a loud tone of voice to set a boundary "I ask that you soften your voice when speaking to me. Otherwise, I am unable to fully listen to you." It may be helpful to set aside some time to name or list your boundaries in different areas of life.

Some helpful questions to start with can be: What can you accept and tolerate? And, what makes you feel uncomfortable and stressed? And knowing that it is important to give yourself permission to have these limits. You are worthy of it.

You can start with a small boundary that is not threatening to you until you get to more challenging ones. When you want to convey them, be direct and assertive. Know that it takes practice to build this skill and that we may need support along the way. Examples of support can be support groups, counseling/therapy, or good friends.

I do want to acknowledge that you may be wondering, what if it is not in my control? This concern is so real and I hear you.

Some people will not respect your boundaries no matter what you do, how much you've practiced, how clear you may be. And that can feel frustrating, and at times even really threatening.

Or the person violating your boundaries may be in the position of authority/power so it can feel very threatening to be direct or assertive about your limits with them.

You may even be living with the person violating your boundaries.

At times, others may pressure you to minimize your feelings or the harm you've experienced, so you feel disempowered to set boundaries.

Know that these are very valid concerns and a real part of life at times. Know that you are not alone in this and that there is support available to you. Please reach out to campus resources such as CAPS, RISE, and CARE for more support. Thanks so much for showing up for yourself and take good care!