

Communication Toolkit

Communicating boundaries



This worksheet is designed to assist you in developing your communication skills to better manage your relationships.

If you are having trouble understanding this worksheet or need support, please call a MensLine Australia counsellor on 1300 78 99 78.

Things to think about

Setting boundaries in relationships can be very challenging, and the importance of open and honest communication forms part of the boundary setting process.

What is setting a boundary?

Setting boundaries is demonstrating to another person in a consistent and non-aggressive way that certain behaviours are acceptable or not acceptable. Healthy boundaries create strength in a relationship.

Relationship boundaries often work best if done as a joint project as a couple. You can still set your own communication boundaries and manage your own behaviour, as setting a boundary may or may not cause another person to change their behaviour.

What it is not: Communicating a boundary is not about stubbornly digging your heels in, and it is not about making another person change their behaviour. It is not about criticism, blame, or judgement.

What it is: Boundaries are based on the understanding that everyone is an individual person, with their own needs, yet is still part of the relationship and the values they share. Boundaries are identifiable when you will not let another person jeopardise your sense of safety and wellbeing and you will not jeopardise theirs.

Activity

How to identify your boundaries

Think of a situation in the last week where you felt threatened or overwhelmed. This could be emotional or physical.

Example: You felt overwhelmed by the many demands placed on you at work and it made you feel angry

Identify the boundary that was not communicated.

Example: You felt your manager had unrealistic expectations of your time

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Thinking about this, what could have helped you to prevent that from happening?

Example: Being clearer about the demands being placed on you at work

What would you like to say or do without getting angry or abusive?

Example: Can we talk about all the things that need to get done and work out a plan?

This worksheet is part of a series on anger management, communication and self-care. You may find it useful to complete other worksheets in this series. For more information or assistance, call MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78