
SETTING AND MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

When we have healthy personal boundaries, we can accept positive people and actions in our lives, but protect ourselves from those that are harmful. In trying to protect ourselves, we may have learned not to trust anyone or allow anyone to get close emotionally. On the other hand, in our search for love and acceptance we may have made ourselves too vulnerable and let others hurt us too easily. Healthy boundaries let us choose whom to trust, how far to trust them, and what actions to accept from them. We also learn to respect the boundaries of others in what we do or say to them.

1. List some people with whom you have difficulty setting or maintaining healthy boundaries, along with situations where you have trouble with them, and what the results have been.

Person	Situation	What Happens	How You Are Affected
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

2. If there are people, situations, or actions about which you are able to set and maintain healthy boundaries, please list them here.

Person	Situation	Action or Behavior
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

3. Why do you think you are able to set and maintain boundaries with the people, situations, or actions on the second list, but not with those on the first list?

EXERCISE VIII.B

4. How can you use the same methods that work with the second list for the people, situations, or actions on the first list, or use other methods to get the same healthy results?

5. What changes would you like to make in your boundaries to help you live a healthy life?

6. What do you need to do to make these changes?

7. What will you do if others resist accepting your boundaries?

Be sure to bring this handout back to your next session with your therapist, and be prepared to talk about your thoughts and feelings about the exercise.