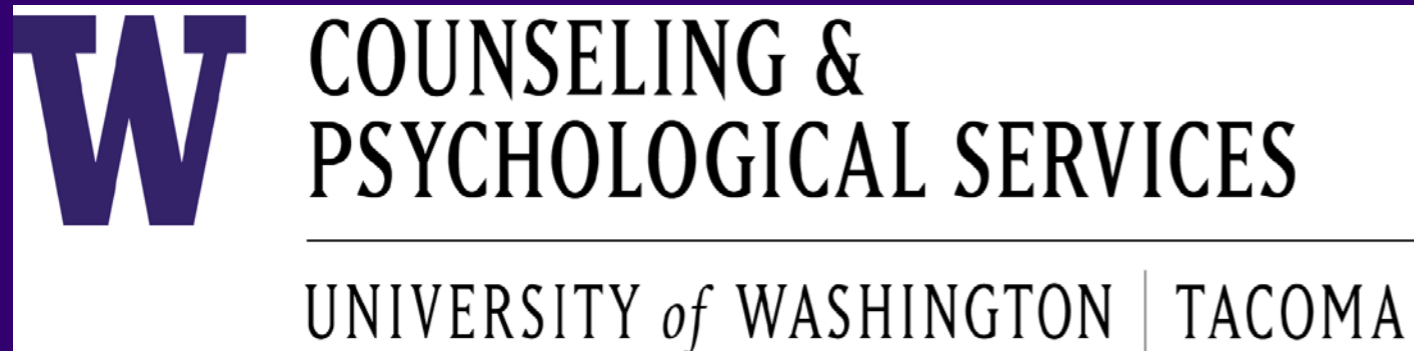


Staying Home & Staying Healthy

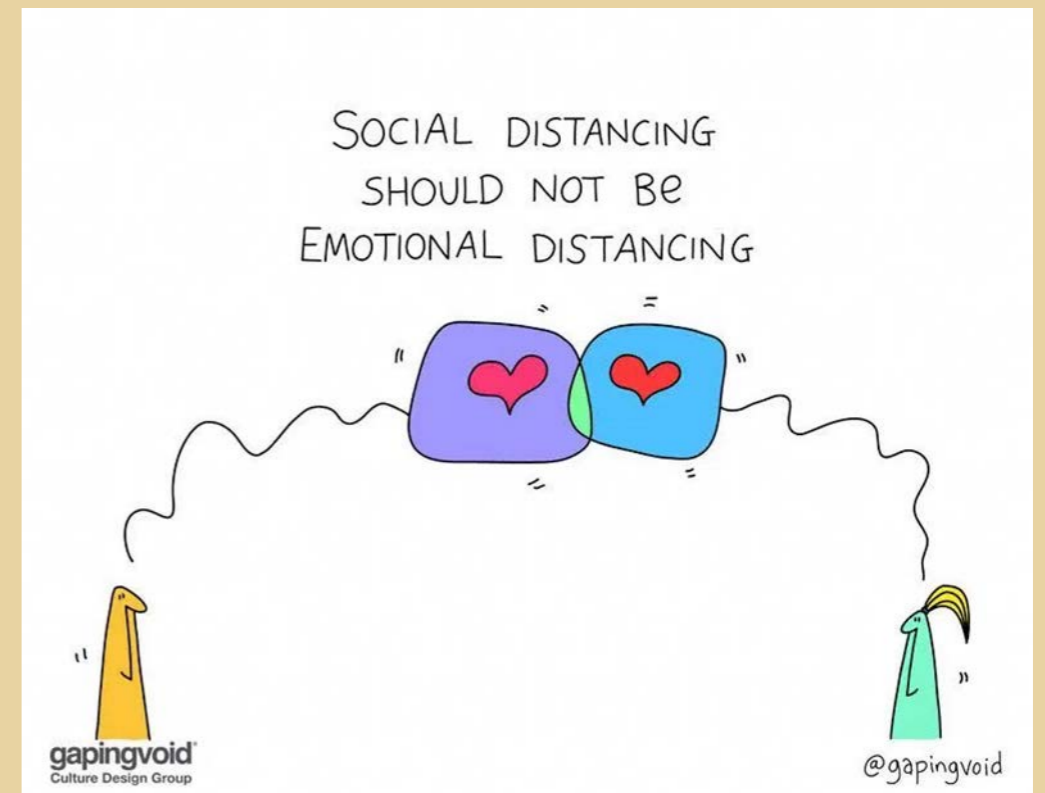
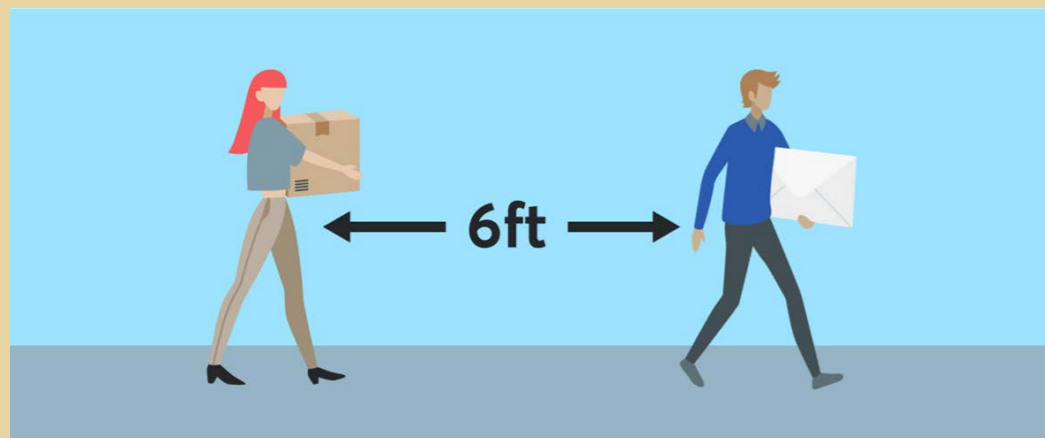
Connecting in the Age of Social Distancing

Veronica Felstad, Doctoral Psychology Intern
Crystal Gonsalves, Psy.D., CAPS Staff Psychologist



Social Distancing vs. Physical Distancing

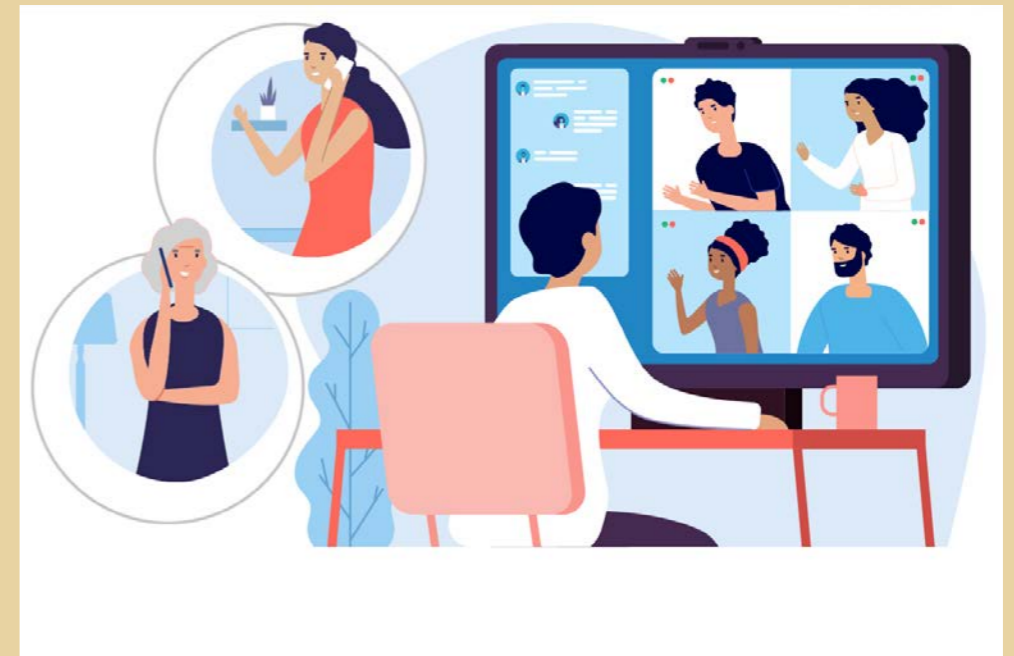
- Staying at least 6 feet away from people to avoid getting sick.
- We are social animals so we need and naturally crave closeness and connection with other people.
- Maybe sending the wrong message?
- Maybe contributing to social isolation?
- Social isolation contributes to substantial increases in anxiety and depression, substance use, loneliness, and domestic violence
- Perhaps physical distancing is better?



Stay Connected

Support groups [virtually] specifically for people who are quarantined can be helpful.

One study found that having such a group and feeling connected to others who had been through the same situation could be a validating, empowering experience and can provide people with the support they might find they are not receiving from other people.



Stay Connected

Examples or ideas

- Zoom activities with friends and loved ones
- “One thing we’ve learned from disasters is the ongoing importance of social supports. The lesson is to keep checking in on people, and keep the support going even after this period of lockdown ends.”
- ❖ Work out on Zoom (yoga or Zumba classes)
- ❖ Watch Netflix series together
- ❖ Play games together
- ❖ Have virtual dinners

Stay Connected



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Examples or ideas

- Practice mindfulness
- Call family members
- Social Media

Remain Responsibly Connected



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Video chats and phone calls with friends and family

Hiking while keeping your distance of at least 6 feet between people

Game night with everyone you live with (if they aren't sick)

Virtual movie night with your family and friends (video chat or text while watching the same movie in your own homes or rooms)

Exercise/yoga/mindfulness videos online to be physically active in the comfort of your own home

Video games that allow you to connect with people around the world

Stay Connected

Giving and receiving handwritten letters

- Writing stimulates and engages the brain to a greater extent, and some experts suggest that the most *authentic* writing is done with pen or pencil.
- Writing a handwritten note can also encourage you to slow down and take some deep, relaxing breaths.
- Neuroscience has proven that when you write something down, it requires deep thought, building more than 10,000 new neural pathways in your brain in one sitting; whereas writing on a computer appears to build only 600 new pathways.
- Longhand can strengthen cognitive skills.



Ways of Connecting with Your Community

Long-term & sustainable activities

- Send your gratitude to healthcare workers
- Donate supplies or funds
- Offer to pick up groceries
- Share different skills
- Give blood



Give you a sense of action and will provide a broader social context to engage in.

Give you a sense of control and bolster your mood and energy levels.



Connecting in College

Seek out social support

- Come together with your dorm-mates or graduate school cohort via technology.
- Turning on your webcam during virtual classes can help you and others feel more connected.

Help others cope

- Your classmates and family members are anxious, too.
- You don't have to fix their problems. It's enough to let them know they're not alone.

Physical Distancing

- Limit your time in public
- Keep your distance
- Bring hand sanitizer
- Wash your hands
- Cover your mouth



Stay Connected



Any Questions so Far?



Communication & Boundaries

- Emotional confusion related to being “isolated” yet unable to have space from others.
- Navigating difficult interactions with family members & friends.
- Compassion for other people’s behavior & healthy boundaries.

OUR HUMAN COMPASSION BINDS US THE ONE TO THE OTHER - NOT IN PITY OR PATRONIZINGLY, BUT AS HUMAN BEINGS WHO HAVE LEARNT HOW TO TURN OUR COMMON SUFFERING INTO HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

-NELSON MANDELA





What Are Boundaries?

Guidelines, rules and limits that a person creates to identify for themselves what are reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave around them and how they will respond when someone steps outside those limits.

A boundary is like a property line. A “No Trespassing” sign sends a clear message that if you violate that boundary, there will be a consequence.

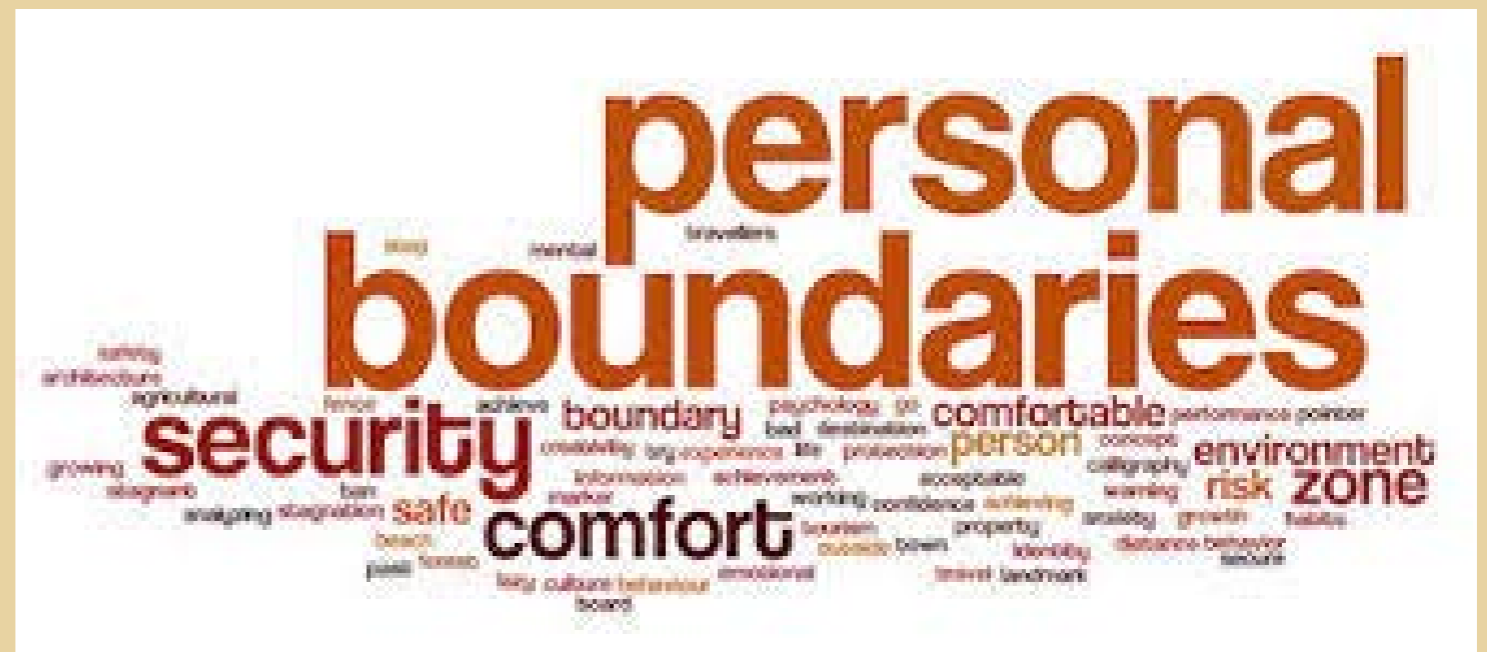


What Are Boundaries?

The **lines are invisible**, can change, and are unique to each individual.

Personal boundaries, just like the “No Trespassing” sign, define where you end and others begin and are determined by the amount of physical and emotional space you allow between yourself and others.

Personal boundaries help you decide what types of communication, behavior, and interaction are acceptable.

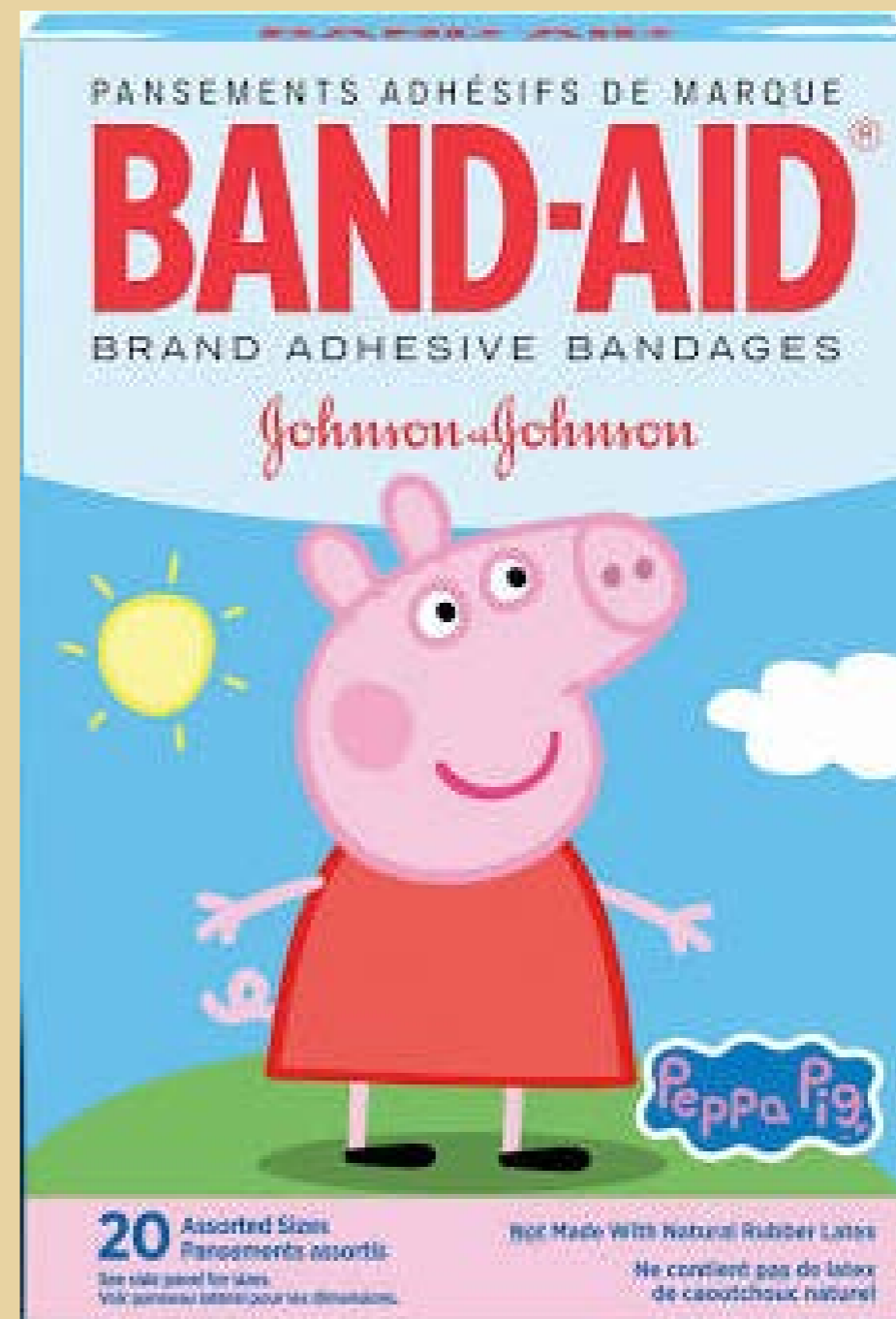


Physical Boundaries

Provide a barrier between you and an intruding force, like a Band-Aid protects a wound from bacteria.

- Our body
- Sense of personal space
- Privacy

Expressed through clothing, shelter, noise tolerance, verbal instruction, body language.





Physical Boundary Violation

A close talker.

Your immediate and automatic reaction is to step back in order to reset your personal space. You send a non-verbal message that when this person stands so close you feel an invasion of your personal space.

If the person continues to move closer, you might verbally protect your boundary by telling him/her to stop crowding you.

- Looking through personal files, texts and emails. Personal belongings.
- Not allowing personal space. (e.g., barging into your room without knocking).



Emotional & Intellectual Boundaries



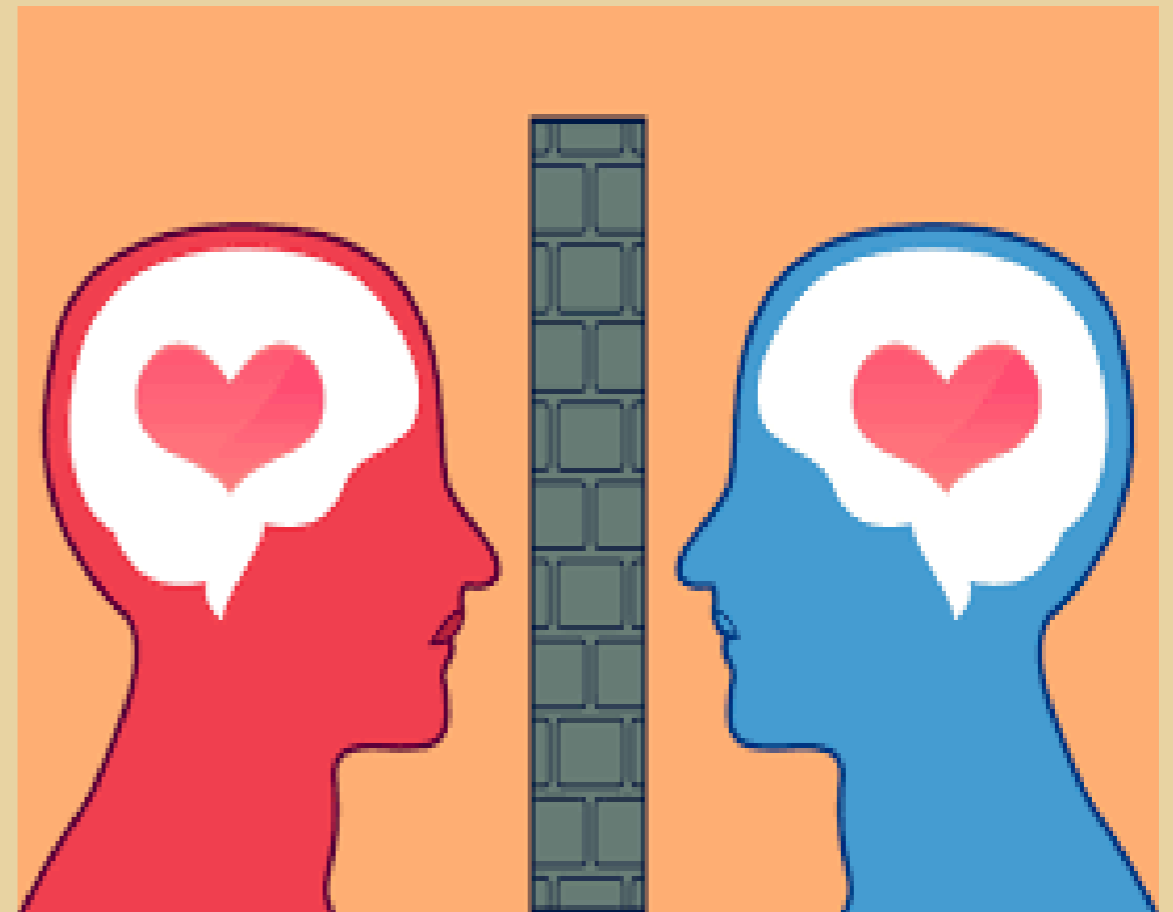
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Protect your self-esteem & ability to separate your feelings from others. Weak emotional boundaries expose you to being greatly affected by others' words, thoughts, and actions and end up feeling bruised, wounded, and run down. Includes beliefs, behaviors, choices, sense of responsibility, and ability to be intimate with others.

Emotional and intellectual boundary invasions are:

- Not knowing how to separate your feelings from others and allowing their mood to dictate your level of happiness or sadness.
- Sacrificing your plans, dreams, and goals in order to please others.
- Taking responsibility for yourself and your actions/behaviors others. Mindfulness of how you react to others and experiences.



Why is it important to set boundaries?



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- To practice self-care and self-respect
- To communicate your needs in a relationship
- To make time and space for positive interactions
- To set limits in a relationship in a way that is healthy

“DARING TO SET
BOUNDARIES IS ABOUT
HAVING THE COURAGE TO
LOVE OURSELVES EVEN
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DISAPPOINTING OTHERS.”

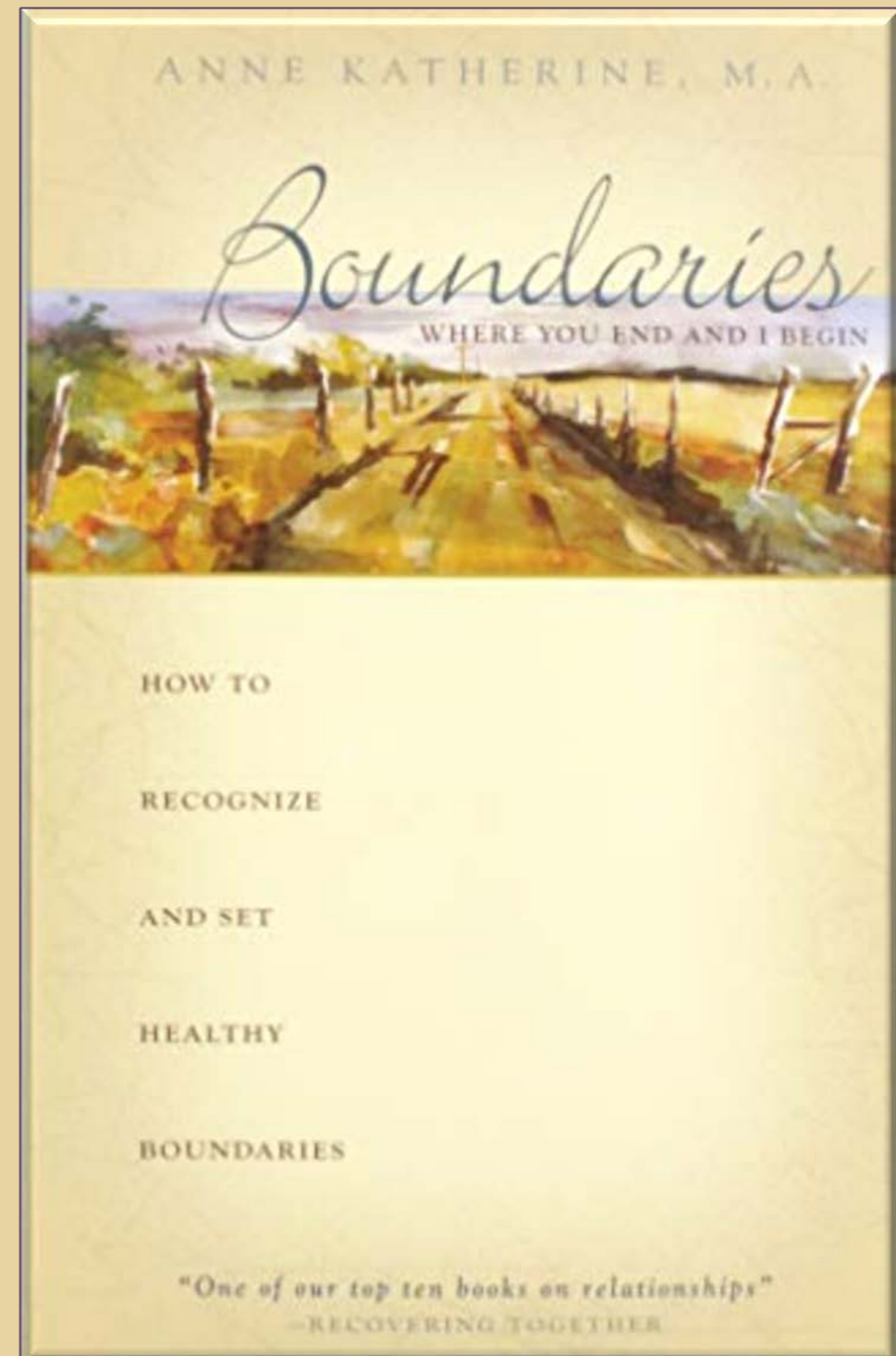
BRENÉ BROWN

EST. 2004 | VALUORINC



Barriers to Boundary Setting

- FEAR of rejection and, ultimately, abandonment
- FEAR of confrontation
- GUILT
- We were not taught healthy boundaries
- Safety Concerns



Cultural Implications of Boundaries & Communication

Saying, “no” can be viewed as disrespectful and can be associated with being rude or impolite.

Its is okay to say “no.” It is okay to not be ready to say “no.”

Communication is 90% non-verbal (facial/body-language & vocal tone).

So how to advocate for yourself?





Say No Without Saying No

Recognize instances when you want to speak up, but you stay quiet or say yes when you mean “no.”

Instead of dwelling on your feelings of helplessness, practice what you want to say the next time this interaction occurs.

Over time you will be able to build the confidence you need to speak clearly about your needs without the guilt or justification.

Practicing lines in role-play mode is far different from actually saying them in real life.

Most of us still have yet to master the art of saying “no,” despite many years of practice.



Say No Without Saying No

If “no” sounds *too harsh* for you, try something that feels softer.

“I can't take this on right now”

“I don't have time in my schedule right now”

“I can't do the entire thing, but I can help with a specific part.”

Resist the inclination to immediately say “yes” to a request, especially when put on the spot. In those situations ask for more time.

“Let me think about that and get back to you.”

This reply give you time to think about what your needs are and enables you to thoughtfully formulate your response.



Say No Without Saying No



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Start with a thank you.

The truth is bad news is always going to be bad news, but it can be slightly eased when it comes with genuine consideration. Offer gratitude before declining.

“Thanks for thinking of me, but I won’t be able to attend.”

Courage-inducing introduction.

Not quite ready to say “no?”

Practice a few words or phrase before coming out and directly saying “no.”

“This is really hard for me to say, but this time I have to say no.”

“I know this may offend you , but this time I have to decline.”

“I’m genuinely sorry, but this time I don’t want to.”

Say No Without Saying No



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What are the consequences of saying “yes?”

Will you become resentful or throw it back in this person’s face if you through with the request or demand of another person?

If the answer is yes, then you can easily see why you’re better off saying no. In fact, you could look at saying “no” as a way to strengthen and protect your relationship.



Tips for Communicating Healthy Boundaries



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- Clearly, Calmly, Firmly, Respectfully.
- Do not justify, get angry, or apologize for the boundary. Your behavior must match the boundaries. You might feel selfish, guilty, or embarrassed when you set a boundary.
- Some people will push back on your boundary, people who may need to work on their own boundaries, are controlling, abusive, or manipulative. Plan on it, expect it, remain firm. If it upsets them, this is their issue.
- You have a right to self-care. Setting boundaries takes practice and determination.
- Anxiety, fear or guilt may prevent you from taking care of yourself. When you feel anger, resentment, oppression or find yourself complaining, it signals the need to set a boundary.
- Develop a support system of people who respect your right to set boundaries. Eliminate toxic people from your life— manipulate, abuse, and control you.
- Respect other people's boundaries.

Physical, Emotional, Intellectual



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How can you make space for yourself in quarantine with others?

- Quiet study time
- Headphones
- Physical/audio book
- Go on a walk
- Meet with academic advisor or professor
- Journal
- Alone time to recharge
- Allow self-compassion & compassion for others



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Resources



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- https://dbt.tools/interpersonal_effectiveness/boundary-building.php
- <https://thewellnesssociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-Anxiety-Workbook.pdf>
- <https://adaa.org/finding-help/coronavirus-anxiety-helpful-resources>
- <https://www.theawakenetwork.com/free-online-meditation-resources-for-the-time-of-social-distancing/>
- <https://www.actmindfully.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FACE-COVID-eBook-by-Russ-Harris-March-2020.pdf>
- <https://www.apaservices.org/practice/ce/self-care/health-providers-covid-19>
- <https://www.actmindfully.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FACE-COVID-eBook-by-Russ-Harris-March-2020.pdf>
- https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf
- https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf