

HEALTHY BOUNDARY SETTING IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN WELLNESS

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY BOUNDARY SETTING?

- A boundary is a limit that we set.
- This boundary may be physical (ie. lock on doors, fences, etc.)
- But boundaries can also be set by behaviors and emotions
- We often learn boundaries from our environment (ie. how our caregivers modeled boundaries)



DIFFERENT BOUNDARY-SETTING STYLES

THE GOAL WHEN SETTING BOUNDARIES IS A HEALTHY BALANCE
(NOT TOO RIGID OR TOO LOOSE)

Rigid boundaries

Inflexible/Rigid boundaries may result in:

Not asking for help when needed

Appearing to be detached from others/ keeping people at a distance

Not ever sharing any personal information

Healthy Boundaries

Healthy Boundaries means we:

Are aware and accepting of our own opinions

Know when to say no and how to effectively say no

Are able to manage our feelings when being told no

Do not frequently push or tests boundaries

Loose boundaries

Loose or poor boundaries may appear as:

Over sharing personal information

Taking on challenges of others and becoming over involved

Agreeing to requests out of fear of being rejected

WHY ARE BOUNDARIES NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN WELLNESS?

- As a clinician boundary setting will allow you to have agency over your life
- You get to determine what your limits are (for example: As a clinician you may decide that you will never do work on Saturdays)
- Going beyond our limits can leave us feeling
 - Resentful
 - Feeling as if we do not have ownership over our own lives
 - Feeling guilty
 - Exhausted and ultimately, burned out



**HOW CAN
SETTING LIMITS
IMPROVE OUR
WELLBEING?**

Allows us to feel agency over our lives

Allows us to plan

Allows us to have more predictability

Allow us to value our personal preferences and morals

HOW TO SAY “NO” EFFECTIVELY

- Say no in a calm manner and provide a quick explanation
- Do not over explain
- Saying no does not have to come from a place of anger
- You do not need to apologize for saying no
- You may want to use words such as “under different circumstances” “I wish I could”



**IT IS NOT YOUR DUTY TO
PLEASE EVERYONE**

- **SOMETIMES INDIVIDUALS MAY GET ANGRY AT YOU FOR SAYING NO**
- **IT IS NOT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGE THEIR EMOTIONS**
- **INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BE ABLE TO MANAGE THEIR OWN DISAPPOINTMENT**
- **BY REMAINING CALM YOU ARE MODELING HOW TO MANAGE EMOTIONS**

SETTING BOUNDARIES CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR PATIENTS FEEL SAFE

- Your patients will feel safer knowing that you can protect them by setting appropriate boundaries (ie. You will not prescribe a dangerous medication just because they are asking for it)
- You can model for your patients that nice and caring people can also say "no"
- You can help your patients understand that prioritizing our self care does not make us selfish but rather responsible

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO SAY “NO” AS CLINICIANS?

- **We want to help others**
 - Remember: You may be able to help at another time
 - Remember: Nobody benefits from their doctor getting burned out
- **We do not like disappointing others**
 - Remember: At times, we may disappoint others in order to do what you believe is best for them clinically
 - Remember: Your patient will be able to handle the disappointment. If they are unable to, it is not your fault that they are unable to manage their emotions. It is also important to think about what else may be going on that the patient cannot regulate their emotions.
- **We worry that our patient will get mad at us**
 - Remember: At times, others will be mad at us, but that does not mean that the relationship will be damaged as a result. It is ok for patients to be mad at us. The hope is that they will be able to forgive us, and move on.
- **We feel guilty when saying “no”**
 - Remember: Guilt is also another normal everyday emotion. And we do not always have to respond to that guilty feeling. At times, it is ok to tolerate the feeling of guilt and move on.