

communication communicating boundaries

This worksheet is a simple tool designed to assist you in developing your personal skills to better manage your current situation.

If you are having problems understanding the content of the worksheet or with the topic and would like further support, please call a MensLine Australia counsellor on 1300 78 99 78.

Things to think about

Setting boundaries in couple 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'?

It is demonstrating to another person in consistent and non-aggressive ways that certain behaviours are acceptable or not acceptable. Healthy boundaries create strength in a relationship. Here are some ideas that can assist.

You may have already completed the work sheet on setting personal boundaries, where you set yourself a limit, determined what you would and would not do, monitored it and changed your behaviour.

Relationship boundaries often work best if done as a joint project as a couple. You can still set your own communication boundaries for yourself 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, it is not about making another person change their behaviour. It is not about criticism or blame or judgement.

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

So how do we communicate this? See work sheet on 'Communication in healthy relationships' as a guide to having this boundary conversation with your partner.

Exercise

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]*

See work sheet on 'Communication in healthy relationship's as a guide to having this boundary conversation with your partner.

What would you like to say or do without being 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.

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