



Community Memorial
HEALTHCARE

Burnout: Setting Boundaries and Finding Support

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This is Us...



Lifetime of Roles: The Many Hats Women Wear

Baby > Baby Girl > Teen > Young Woman > Woman > Senior Citizen

Women navigate a vast, shifting mosaic of personal, familial, professional and societal roles across their lives:

- Early Years: daughter, sister, friend, student
- Professional and Public Life: worker/professional, leader/executive, entrepreneur/business owner, mentor/teacher
- Family and Home: partner/wife, mother, caregiver, homemaker
- Later years and Community: grandmother/matriarch, community leader/activist, retiree/elder, widow



Erik Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

- Generativity vs. Stagnation (middle adulthood 40 – 65 years) — create or nurture things that will carry on to the next generation
- Integrity vs Despair (older adult ages 65-death)-) — reflect on life with a sense of meaning and fulfillment
- Erikson, E.H. (1950). Childhood and Society. W.W. Norton & Company.

Top Concerns of Women Ages 40 – 70

- Depression
- Anxiety and Chronic Worry
- Menopause-related Mood and Psychological Changes
- Sleep Problems
- Caregiver Stress and Emotional Overload
- Loneliness and Lose of Social Connection
- Identify, Purpose and the “What Now?” Question
- Body Image, Aging and Self Esteem
- Grief and Major Life Transitions
- Sexual health, Relationships and Intimacy
- Cognitive Concerns
- Fear of Illness, Disability and Mortality
- Financial and Career Stress
- Trauma and Resurfacing of Earlier Psychological Difficulties



Top Concerns

- Depression*
- Anxiety and chronic stress*
- Menopause-related mood and sleep problems
- Loneliness and social isolation
- Caregiving/burnout and emotional overload*
- Identity, aging, body image, and loss of purpose
- Grief, Relationships, health, and financial uncertainty

How Does Setting Boundaries Relate to Anxiety and Depression?

- Boundaries are the invisible lines that protect our emotional well-being, and learning how to set and enforce them is essential for cultivating healthy relationships and preserving personal peace.
- Many of us are taught to be people-pleasers, to put other's needs before our own, or to ignore our personal limits in favor of productivity. Unfortunately, this comes at a cost to our mental health. Research shows that without clear boundaries, we risk burnout, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion.
- Boundaries refer to the limits we set to protect our emotional, mental, and physical space. These limits are personal and can vary from one person to another. They include decisions about how much time we spend with others, how much emotional energy we invest in relationships, and what behaviors we will not tolerate.

Consequences of Not Setting Boundaries

- When we don't establish boundaries, we might find ourselves feeling overwhelmed, resentful, or drained. The reason? Without boundaries, it becomes too easy to take on other people's emotional burdens or agree to things that violate our personal values.
- A 2020 study in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships found that individuals with weak emotional boundaries often experienced higher levels of stress and relationship dissatisfaction. (K.L. Smith et al., 2020)



The Link Between Boundaries and Mental Health

Prevention of Burnout

In a society that prizes productivity and self-sacrifice, it's easy to feel as though we need to constantly give to others. But overcommitting ourselves-whether at work, in friendships, or in family relationships-can lead to burnout. Setting clear limits prevents overextension.

Reduced Anxiety and Stress

Constantly being pulled in different directions-whether through excessive demands at work or pressure from personal relationships or family-creates anxiety. A study published in Clinical Psychology Review in 2021 found that people who struggled to set boundaries were more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depression (Johnson et al., 2021). Setting boundaries helps individuals prioritize their mental health by reducing external pressures and fostering a sense of control.

Improved Emotional Regulation

Boundaries are key to emotional self-care. When we set limits around how we engage with others, we are less likely to internalize negative emotions, be manipulated, or feel emotionally drained. People who maintain healthy emotional boundaries are better equipped to regulate their feelings and respond more calmly in stressful situations (Lucas & Stone, 2020). This means we're less reactive and more resilient in the face of challenges.



How to Set Healthy Boundaries With Grace

- Understand that politeness is not the same as compliance: you may have been raised to be easy going, to not cause trouble or to understand that your needs are only acceptable if they don't inconvenience others.
- Saying no is not being difficult, or rude.

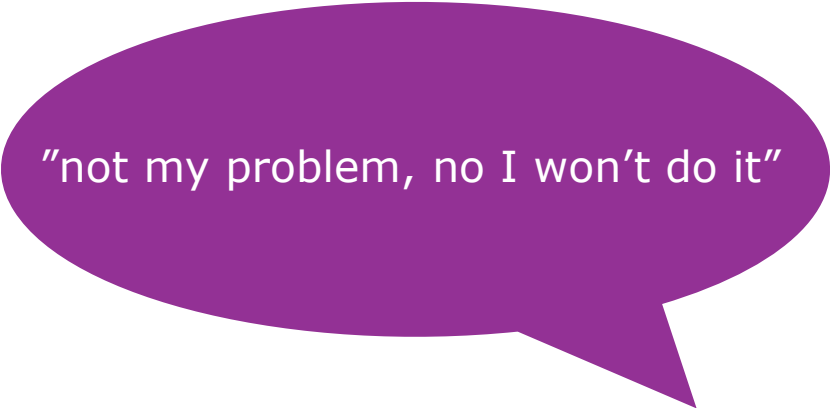
How to Set Healthy Boundaries With Grace

Reframe:

Politeness is about how you communicate.

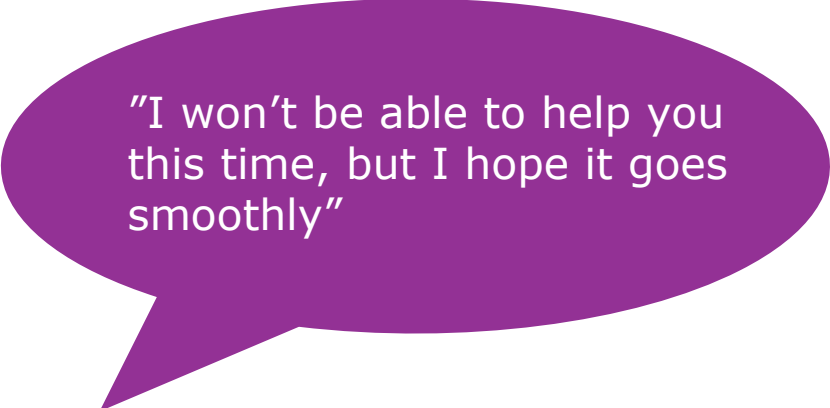
Boundaries are about what you allow-they are not opposites. You can say no kindly. Being polite doesn't require self sacrifice.

Rude



"not my problem, no I won't do it"

Polite



"I won't be able to help you this time, but I hope it goes smoothly"

Healthy Boundary Setting

- Boundaries are not rejections, they are instructions. **Boundaries are guidelines**; The message is: this is the way to interact with me in a way that works for both of us.
- **Without boundaries you create a house with no doors or locks**, you may feel generous at first, but may feel resentful, used or invaded later. Come eat my food, sleep on my couch, but then you feel invaded later.
- Boundaries are like doors, you welcome guests but on your terms. People are not confused about your boundaries, they are confused about your lack of consistency. People don't learn where the lines are **Boundaries provide clarity**.
- Unlearn the habit of putting yourself last.
- **Confidence is quiet**-stop overexplaining yourself. Over explaining and apologizing are signs that you struggle with setting boundaries. The more you explain the more you invite negotiation.
- Healthy boundary setting sounds grounded. **It is delivered calmly, respectfully and firmly.**
- **Tone matters** — use a steady voice and body language that is relaxed, words are minimal and clear. You teach people how to treat you through consistency. Stop abandoning yourself. **Honesty delivered with kindness. Kindness and firmness can exist concurrently.**

Key Takeaways

How to Set Boundaries for Mental Health

Setting boundaries can be challenging, especially if you're used to putting others first. But with practice, it becomes easier. Here are some tips to help you start:

1. Know your limits

The first step in setting boundaries is understanding your own needs. Reflect on what drains you and what brings you joy. Are there certain activities or people that leave you feeling exhausted? Knowing your limits is the foundation of healthy boundary-setting.

2. Communicate clearly

Setting boundaries requires assertiveness. Be direct and clear about what you need, whether it's asking someone for space, saying "no" to additional responsibilities, or discussing emotional needs with a partner. The more clearly you communicate, the more likely others are to respect your boundaries.

3. Be consistent

Consistency is key when it comes to boundaries. If you let them slide once in a while, others might start to ignore them. Stay firm in your boundaries, even when it feels uncomfortable. Over time, people will learn to respect your limits.

4. Practice self-compassion

Setting boundaries can be tough, especially if you feel guilty about disappointing others. It's important to practice self-compassion and remind yourself that setting boundaries is a form of self-care. Protecting your mental health is not selfish — it's necessary for living a balanced, healthy life.

Key Takeaways

How to Set Boundaries for Mental Health

5. Know that you can set boundaries and still be kind

Setting boundaries can be done with a calm tone of voice, kind words, and good intentions. Many people feel that they are “mean” for setting boundaries, when it is an act of care for a relationship. Advocating for your needs in this way prevents resentment from building up over time.



Key Takeaways

Seek Support

Boundaries are not just about saying “no” to others — they’re about saying “yes” to yourself. By learning to set healthy limits, you protect your mental health, enhance your emotional well-being, and cultivate stronger, more respectful relationships.

There are times when people need professional support as they start to set boundaries for themselves. Women who experience mental health challenges like anxiety and depression or have a history of trauma may benefit from professional care and tailored treatment plans.



THANK YOU

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