

6 Types of Boundaries + Questions to Explore Them

By: Maureen Lowrance March 8, 2021

Website: <https://urbanwellnesscounseling.com/6-types-of-boundaries/>

We love boundaries.

Boundaries are the foundation of healthy relationships.

They're what help us protect our energy and prioritize our time & wellness. We've talked a lot about them before—[workplace boundaries](#), [boundaries while social distancing](#), [kindly & firmly communicating boundaries](#), and [how setting them can transform your relationships](#)—but we're not quite done with them yet. Today we're going to be talking about the six types of boundaries you should be setting. These types include:

- physical boundaries
- emotional boundaries
- time boundaries
- sexual boundaries
- intellectual boundaries
- material boundaries

Let's jump into each one:

What are physical boundaries?

Physical boundaries would be the types of boundaries you set regarding your body, your touch, your space, what you eat and drink, and when you're active and resting. Questions you can ask yourself to explore your physical boundaries could be:

- How am I comfortable being touched by others? (Hugs, handshakes, high fives, not at all, etc.)
- Who am I comfortable being touched by? (Friends, partners, family, co-workers, etc.)
- Am I comfortable with people coming into my bedroom, or is that space just for me?
- Is there anyone whose input I would like in regard to food I make & eat?
- Are there foods or drinks I won't have? (ex.: alcoholic beverages)
- How will I prioritize the time I need to rest?

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What are emotional boundaries?

Emotional boundaries are the types of boundaries you set regarding what you're comfortable sharing emotionally with others. This is things like deciding when to share and when to take time to yourself, deciding your capacity for listening and supporting others, what you're comfortable sharing with others, etc. Questions to help you explore your emotional boundaries could be:

- Who will I turn to when I need to discuss something personal? Who am I not comfortable sharing personal things with?
- How will I make space to process my own emotions so that when I share I'm not just "dumping" problems onto someone else?
- How will my chosen confidants check in with one another on our capacity for listening/sharing?
- What types of things am I not comfortable sharing with friends, family, etc.?

What are time boundaries?

Time boundaries are the boundaries you set for yourself regarding how you spend your time, how you prioritize your time, what your time is worth, etc. Questions you can ask yourself to explore these time boundaries can be:

- How much time would I like to reserve just for myself every day/week/etc.?
- What takes priority when I am dividing up my free time?
- If someone asks you to collaborate or work together professionally, what do you charge per hour? How will you decide what extra projects to devote time to?

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What are sexual boundaries?

Sex educators all over the internet have been working hard in recent years to address the importance of sexual boundaries! These include things like consent, establishing communication patterns, setting rules about safety, etc. Questions to help you explore and communicate your sexual boundaries can be things like:

- How do I communicate consent verbally? And how do I communicate it non-verbally? How does my sexual partner?
- What types of sexual intimacy am I comfortable with? What about my partner?
- How do I like to communicate when sexually intimate? Mainly body language? Mainly verbally? A mixture of both?
- What are my limits regarding sexual safety? Are multiple forms of contraception necessary for me to feel comfortable (condom + pill/IUD/etc.)? Do I prefer going with my partner to get tested for STIs? How will I manage STI health + safety?

What are intellectual boundaries?

Intellectual boundaries are the types of boundaries we set that relate to our thoughts and ideas. Things like how we respond to someone not respecting our ideas, how we communicate with others, when we discuss something vs. when we know it's not a good time. Questions we can ask ourselves to explore these boundaries include:

- What does respecting ideas & other perspectives mean to me? I.e. What behavior from others will make me feel that my ideas are being dismissed or diminished? What will I do to take care of myself if that happens?
- How will I show others I respect their ideas and perspectives?
- What will signify to me that it's time to walk away from a discussion? (are you okay with friendly debates? Are you

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okay with heated debates? Do you prefer to remove yourself from conversations before heated turns to conflict?)

- How will you communicate when it's time for you to remove yourself from a conversation?
- How will you communicate that your ideas aren't being respected?

What are material boundaries?

These are boundaries regarding your material possessions, your home, etc. Questions you can use to explore your material boundaries can be:

- What can I afford to share?
- What am I willing to share?
- How will I share what I have?
- Who will I share with?
- What will I not share?

Boundaries not only protect our time and energy, but they also help to protect our relationships. They make us examine our own limits and challenge us to communicate more directly, which helps to prevent miscommunications, misunderstandings and built up resentment.