



The Family Recovery Foundation
FIX YOUR FAMILY
MODULE 7

Boundaries

Objective: Equip families with the knowledge and skills to establish healthy boundaries for their overall well-being while supporting their loved one's recovery journey.

1. Importance of Boundaries for Self-Protection and Well-Being

- **Definition:** Boundaries are the limits we set for ourselves within relationships. They define who we are and who we are not, helping us maintain our individuality and personal integrity. Dr Henry Cloud
- **Benefits:** Establishing boundaries reduces stress, fosters emotional safety, and improves relationship dynamics by clarifying expectations and responsibilities.

"Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. A boundary shows where I end and someone else begins, leading to a sense of ownership."

"We can't manipulate people into swallowing our boundaries by sugar coating them. Boundaries are a 'litmus test' for the quality of our relationships."

"Just as homeowners set physical property lines around their land, we need to set mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries for our lives to help us distinguish what is our responsibility and what isn't."

"You need to set limits and clearly define what you will do and what you won't do."

Dr. Henry Cloud

"Boundaries are not separation; they are a place where connection happens."

"Healthy boundaries actually increase our capacity for caring, because it means we can say 'no' when we need to, and 'yes' when we truly want to."

"We must be able to say 'no' to the demands, roles, and obligations others place on us in order to say 'yes' to our own life."

Gabor Mate



<https://youtu.be/zjcPkKHZRCg?si=6kApdslVv-1ocopl>

Click here...

2. **Setting Boundaries with Love and Compassion**

- **Concept:** Boundaries are not about punishment or control but about taking responsibility for our own actions and emotions. They help maintain healthy relationships by ensuring mutual respect and understanding.
- **Identity:** Boundaries help us define our identity and ownership of our lives, allowing us to interact with others from a place of strength and clarity.

3. **Identifying and Stopping Enabling Behaviors**

- **Definition:** Enabling behaviors are actions that unintentionally support or perpetuate an individual's addiction by preventing them from facing the natural consequences of their behavior.
- **Examples of Enabling Behaviors:**

- **Financial Support:** Providing money that might be used to purchase substances.
 - **Making Excuses:** Covering up for the addict's behavior at work or with friends.
 - **Taking Over Responsibilities:** Handling the addict's responsibilities, such as paying bills, which they should manage themselves.
 - **Rescuing:** Bailing them out of legal trouble or other crises caused by their addiction.
 - **Denial:** Ignoring or minimizing the severity of the addiction.
 - **Sacrificing Own Needs:** Neglecting personal needs and well-being to take care of the addicted individual.
 - **Avoiding Confrontation:** Failing to address problematic behavior to avoid conflict.
 - **Overprotecting:** Shielding the addict from any form of discomfort or hardship.
- **Impact of Enabling:** Enabling behaviors hinder recovery by preventing the individual from facing the consequences of their actions, thereby reducing their motivation to change.
- **Developing a Plan:** Creating a personal plan to identify and stop enabling behaviors, including setting clear, consistent boundaries.
 - **Direct Communication:** Be clear and somewhat explicit about the new boundaries. Take time to think about where you feel resentments. Take time to think about what you need, what you desire and imagine the best case scenario.
 - **Use "I" Statements:** Frame your discussions around how you feel and what you need.
 - **Offer Alternatives:** Instead of (_____) support, provide information on other resources, recovery programs, or alternative options that can offer help. This shows support for their recovery without enabling unhealthy behaviors.
 - **Consistency is Key:** Once you set these boundaries, it's crucial to stick to them. Consistency reinforces the seriousness of your decisions and helps your loved one understand the consequences of their actions. **STICK TO THE SCRIPT.**

1. Maintaining **consistency** with the boundaries you've set is crucial. It not only solidifies the seriousness of your decision but also helps your loved one understand the reliable nature of the consequences tied to their actions. It's important to respond the same way ***each time the boundary is tested***, as inconsistency can open the door to manipulation and might encourage further attempts to cross established boundaries. A consistent approach helps to reinforce the structure and predictability needed for your loved one to take their recovery seriously.
 - a. **Set Clear Rules:** Before enforcing boundaries, ensure they are clearly defined and shared, (not understood) by all parties involved.
 - b. **Unified Front:** If applicable, make sure all family members are on the same page and respond in a unified manner to prevent mixed signals.
 - c. **Document Agreements:** Sometimes, writing down the boundaries and the consequences for crossing them can help both parties remember and respect the rules.

- **Plan for Pushback:** Be prepared for resistance or emotional reactions. Plan your responses ahead of time and *stay calm and resolute*. When setting firm boundaries, especially those involving financial support, expect resistance or emotional responses. It's important to prepare yourself for these reactions and think through how you will handle them. Planning might include rehearsing your responses, setting up a support system for yourself, or even having a professional like a therapist present during these discussions. Being prepared helps you remain calm and composed, ensuring that the conversation remains constructive and aligned with your ultimate goal of supporting their recovery within healthy limits.

1. **Emotional Preparedness:** Mentally prepare yourself for emotional responses. Recognize that pushback is often driven by discomfort and fear rather than personal attacks.
2. **Support System:** Have a support system in place, like a friend, family member, or therapist, who can offer you emotional support if conversations become challenging.

3. **Script Responses:** Develop and practice responses to potential arguments or pleas. This helps you remain calm and collected during difficult conversations.
 4. **Professional Involvement:** In some cases, having a professional such as a therapist present during these discussions can provide a neutral ground and expert guidance.
-

1. Expert Insights on Boundaries

- **Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend:** Their book *"Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life"* provides deeper insights into the importance and methods of setting boundaries.
- **Dr. Gabor Maté:** His work on addiction emphasizes the importance of maintaining personal boundaries for self-care and emotional well-being.
- **Nedra Glover Tawwab:** Her book *"Set Boundaries, Find Peace"* offers practical advice on boundary-setting.

2. Support Resources

- **Al-Anon Family Groups:** Support groups focusing on families and friends of alcoholics, providing shared experiences and strategies for boundary-setting.
- **Professional Counseling:** The importance of seeking professional guidance to navigate complex family dynamics and develop personalized boundary-setting strategies.
- **Online Forums and Support Groups:** Access to online communities where families can share their experiences and gain support in setting boundaries.