



Mental Health Association of Northern Kentucky

A LEADER IN PROVIDING ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, AND SERVICES THAT PROMOTE MENTAL WELLNESS

EDUCATION AND SCREENING OUTREACH PARTNER FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND
NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

513 Madison Avenue, 3rd Floor Covington, KY 41011 859-431-1077 or www.mhanky.org

HOW PEOPLE WITH DIFFERING BOUNDARIES ACT & REACT

People with Healthy Boundaries

- Willing to say no, to let others know when they're stepping on their toes, but also willing to say yes.
- Have the ability to make requests & to seek alternatives when others must say no to them.
- Have a strong sense of identity & self-respect.
- Make appropriate self-disclosure ; reveal information about themselves gradually, as mutual sharing takes place & trust develops.
- Expect shared responsibility for relationships.
- Recognize when a problem is theirs or another person's. When it is not their problem they do not jump in to rescue the other person.
- Do not tolerate disrespect or abuse.

People with Rigid Boundaries

- Tend to say no if a request is going to involve close interaction.
- Have very strong defenses to protect themselves from getting close to people. May pick fights, for example, or stay so busy that they have no time for one-on-one relationships.
- Avoid closeness because you fear either abandonment (being left alone) or engulfment (being smothered).
- Make little or no self-disclosure, perhaps preferring to draw the other person out.
- Inability to identify your feelings and what you want / need.
- Have very few close relationships, though they may have many acquaintances.

People with “Collapsed” or No Boundaries

- Can't say no because of fear of abandonment or rejection.
- Share too much personal information too soon.
- Take on other people's feelings rather than just feeling empathy.
- Have a high tolerance for abuse and being treated with disrespect.
- Believe they “must have deserved it” when treated badly
- Will do anything to avoid conflict.
- Have no ability to see flaws in others because they're focused on being what they think other people want them to be.

Have no sense of self, who they are, what they believe, etc.