

A boundary is something that sets a border or limit. Boundaries can be physical, emotional, or intellectual.

Physical boundaries refer to your body, your ability to control when and how others approach you, see you, talk to you, or touch you. Example: Building a fence between you and your neighbour, refusing to hug someone you don't feel comfortable with.

Emotional boundaries have to do with your feelings, your ability to express your feelings, and keeping them separate from the emotion of others. When your emotional boundaries are well developed, you are in charge of your own feelings! You can be compassionate towards others without taking on their feelings or problems.

Intellectual boundaries allow you to have your own thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and values. You can speak for yourself and express your opinions. You can also separate out other ideas coming from other people.



Boundaries can be **spoken** or **unspoken**. Your actions (walking away from a person who is insulting you) speak as loudly as your words ("I won't stand for this!"). Both can be effective ways of communicating boundaries.

The purpose of setting boundaries is to **take care of yourself**. Boundaries are ways you can protect yourself on a physical, emotional, and/or intellectual level. This can help your self-esteem and contribute to your self-worth.

Boundaries should be **clear, specific, and reasonable**.

In healthy relationships, people respect each other's boundaries. Each person has mutual respect for the other person's needs, body, thoughts, values and feelings.