

SETTING BOUNDARIES TOOLKIT

Do you feel worn out socially? Do you feel like you are constantly giving or helping others and struggling to take care of yourself? Although there are many causes and coping strategies for this problem, setting boundaries might be one way to help your own wellness. Take a look at the following tools to see if you might benefit from personalizing and adding them to our own toolkit.

Determine what your own boundaries are and what it looks like when people respect or violate your boundaries (rigid vs. loose; emotional vs. physical vs. financial).

Remember that you can have different boundaries for different situations: physical, sexual, financial/material, mental/emotional, spiritual, social, etc. Your boundaries can also change as you change.

Understand that your peer group and your family may have different boundaries, and seek guidance from trusted supports who can help you navigate both expectations.

Remember that you don't need to justify your boundaries when setting them—while it may be courteous to offer a brief explanation, you don't owe anyone an apology or long explanation for why you need to set certain boundaries.

Communicate your boundaries to people in your life, instead of assuming that they are common sense or self-evident.

Respect other people's autonomy by remembering that as much as you want to help them, they ultimately have to make and live with their own choices.

Reframe the fear that setting boundaries is selfish by remembering that you help others most effectively when you are operating on full instead of empty.

Identify actions that you need to take to keep yourself safe and healthy if your boundaries are violated.

Remind yourself that setting boundaries takes practice and patience. Keep practicing how to set boundaries for yourself, so that you become comfortable setting them. Not everyone is going to understand your need to set boundaries and you may also take time to understand what you need for yourself.

Hold your ground when setting boundaries. Some may try to convince you that it is not necessary to set your boundaries or they may find ways to break these boundaries down. Distancing yourself from people who do not respect your boundaries may be helpful for you.

Contact the Counseling Center at (808)735-4845 or counselingcenter@chaminade.edu