Healthy boundaries and wellbeing



Healthy boundaries are an important part of looking after our mental fitness and resilience. They help us understand our limits, protect our energy, and create space for rest and recovery.

When we don't have clear boundaries, we can be at risk of becoming overwhelmed, stretched too thin, or emotionally drained over time. Setting boundaries is not about shutting people out, but about creating balance, so we can show up as our best selves.

Healthy boundaries can help to:

- Reduce stress and feelings of overwhelm.
- Improve focus and energy levels.
- Support healthier relationships.
- Protect time for rest, recovery and personal priorities.
- Build confidence in communicating our needs.

Practical ways to put boundaries in place

Boundaries that are small and consistent changes can make a real difference. Below are some practical steps to help you begin to identify your own boundaries.

- **Start by noticing your limits** - Pay attention to when you feel tired, stressed, or stretched too thin - these can be signs a boundary is needed.
- **Try to communicate clearly with others** – Phrases like "I can't take that on right now" or "I'll need to come back to you on that" can signal to others that your capacity is full at the moment.
- **Protect time for rest and recovery** - Block out breaks, downtime, and time away from screens or work where possible.
- **Learn to pause before saying yes** - Give yourself the time needed to make a choice that feels right, rather than rushed.
- **Use support where needed** - Talking to people you trust for support can help you feel more confident setting boundaries.

Boundaries in the workplace

Work is a common place where boundaries can become blurred, especially during busy or high-pressure periods. Clear boundaries at work help support wellbeing, focus, and sustainable performance.

Some examples include:

- **Managing availability** - Being clear about working hours and when you are or aren't available to respond.
- **Prioritising workload** - Having open conversations about capacity and deadlines if work becomes unmanageable.
- **Taking breaks** - Stepping away and using your full break entitlement where possible.
- **Digital boundaries** - Limiting after-hours emails or notifications where appropriate.
- **Asking for support** - Speaking to a manager early if you are feeling overwhelmed or need adjustments.

Summary

Recognising our limits, setting boundaries, and reaching out for support when things feel overwhelming are key to looking after ourselves and building our mental resilience. Can you think of one boundary you could strengthen or put in place this week?

Further support

Find further support at Red Cross and Mental Health UK.

You could also check if you have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) through your organisation, which can provide 24/7 mental health support.