

## Nuts and Bolts Interpersonal Boundaries:

**Definition:**  
*Interpersonal boundaries are the physical, emotional, and psychological limits we establish to demarcate ourselves from others. These lines enable us to distinguish our own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors from those around us.*

**Benefits to Maintaining Healthy Boundaries:**

- Healthy, adaptable interpersonal boundaries are essential for the maintenance of emotional health, along with identity consolidation.*
- Clear, right-sized boundaries must be established and maintained, as part of healthy and enduring interpersonal relationships.*
- Appropriate relational boundaries promote and constitute evidence of self-confidence and a positive, healthy self-concept.*
- Balanced, healthy interpersonal boundaries foster good communication and enhance relational fulfillment and satisfaction.*
- Safeguarding boundaries enhances a sense of security, stability, and personal control.*

**Signs of Unhealthy Boundaries:**

- Going against one's own personal values or allowing violation of own rights to please others.*
- Letting others define you.*
- Expecting others to fill your needs.*
- Feeling bad or guilty when you say "no."*
- Being unable to say "no."*
- Not speaking up when you are treated poorly.*
- Falling apart when another doesn't accept, or approve of you.*
- Falling "in love" with someone you barely know or who endorses needing you.*
- Accepting physical or sexual advances that you don't want and for which you don't feel ready.*
- Touching another person without asking.*

## Strategies for Maintaining Healthy Ones:

- Take responsibility for how you allow others to treat you.*
- Set clear and decisive limits so that others will respect them; then be willing to do whatever it takes to enforce them.*
- Recognize that other people's needs and feelings are not more important than your own.*
- Learn to say "no." A healthy amount of self-interest is necessary for ensuring boundaries. You should not do anyone favors at your own expense.*
- Identify the attitudes and behaviors that you find unacceptable. Set limits with others in advance and be prepared and willing to let others know when they've crossed the line, acted inappropriately, or disrespected you in any way.*
- Strive to determine who constitutes your true self; remain loyal to that person; do not succumb to pressures from others to be anyone else.*
- Trust and believe in yourself. You are the highest authority on you. You know yourself best. You know what you need, want, and value. Stick to your guns and remain true to yourself, no matter what pressures are exerted from others.*
- Don't let anyone else make decisions for you. Healthy and sound boundaries make it possible for you to respect your own strengths, abilities, and individuality as well as those of others.*
- An unhealthy imbalance occurs when you encourage neediness, or present as needy; interpersonal boundaries become tainted when you want to be rescued, or become the rescuer.*
- Surround yourself with those with whom you can be fully genuine; with whom you feel comfortable to be your full and true self; treasure and invest in relationships with those who seem to unconditionally accept and support the real you.*
- Identify role models who consistently maintain flexible, healthy, and balanced interpersonal boundaries.*
- Spend quality time with loved ones frequently.*
- Monitor, identify, and label your emotions to yourself and aloud to trusted others.*
- Work on pacing the degree to which you reveal private thoughts or feelings with peers, and titrate that process, in a thoughtful, graduated manner.*