

Nuts and Bolts of 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 to Help Teens Develop Healthy Ones:

- Model the following:
 - *Maintain healthy, balanced interpersonal boundaries, in all relationships, at all times.*
 - *Take responsibility for how you allow others to treat you.*
 - *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.*
 - *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.*
- Increase the following behaviors:
 - *Spend quality "agenda-free" time with your teens on a recurring, frequent basis.*
 - *Listen with undivided attention; refrain from judging, advising, or trying to change their feelings or viewpoints.*
 - *Express empathy (validate their feelings and thoughts).*
 - *Cultivate their natural aptitudes, talents, passions, wherever and whenever possible.*
 - *Point out their positive qualities, strengths, talents, wherever and whenever possible.*
 - *Take an interest in their interests, by asking nonjudgmental questions, being present at key events, being aware of their activities.*
 - *Take an interest in their friends and boyfriends, girlfriends.*