



*Guiding ✨
With Amber*

Boundary Setting

Whilst supporting a loved
one with addiction.

Amber Lights in Oxford

Welcome

Hi, I'm Amber and welcome to this short guide on boundary setting.

Living with or supporting someone struggling with addiction can be emotionally challenging and it can be hard to separate yourself from.

When supporting someone with addiction, establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries is not just helpful—it's essential.

So here is a short guide on boundaries and how you can implement them.



Understanding Boundaries

Boundaries are personal limits that define what behaviours you will and will not accept. They are:

- Not about controlling others, but about taking responsibility for yourself.
- Acts of self-respect that communicate your needs clearly.
- Essential for healthy relationships, especially those affected by addiction.
- Protective measures that could prevent the feeling of enabling.



Why boundaries matter

When addiction enters a relationship, boundaries often become blurred. You might find yourself:

- Making excuses for your loved one's behaviour.
- Taking on further responsibilities.
- Neglecting your own needs and wellbeing.
- Experiencing heightened stress, anxiety, or resentment.

Healthy boundaries can help to protect your own wellbeing and help to prevent burnout or emotional exhaustion. It demonstrates that while you still care you are not willing to accept certain behaviour types or patterns.

Boundaries can also improve capacity to be present for your loved one in a sustainable way.

You cannot offer help if you are depleted.

Setting Boundaries

1. Self-Assessment:

Before communicating boundaries to others, get clear with yourself:

- What behaviours are causing you distress?
- What are your non-negotiables?
- What do you need to maintain your own wellbeing?
- What responsibilities do not belong to you?

2. Define Clear, Specific Boundaries

Effective boundaries are:

- Concrete and specific (not vague or general).
- Focused on behaviours (not personality or character).
- Reasonable and enforceable.

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Setting Boundaries

3. Communicate Effectively

When expressing boundaries:

- Choose a calm moment (not during an argument or crisis).
- Use "I" statements that focus on your feelings and needs.
- Be direct but compassionate.
- State the boundary clearly.
- Avoid blame, criticism, or ultimatums.

4. Maintain Consistency:

- Follow through with stated consequences.
- Expect and prepare for pushback.
- Resist the urge to make exceptions "just this once".

Boundaries may look like

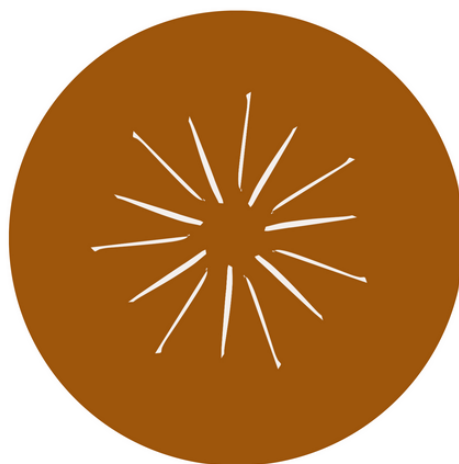
Financial: "I will not give you money to buy substances."

Emotional: "I need to step away from conversations when voices are raised."

Safety: "I will not allow illegal substances in our home."

Time: "I can support you at your recovery meetings, but I need my own time for self-care."

Support: "I will help you find support, but I cannot force you to participate."



Boundary Examples

Setting a Financial Boundary:

Instead of: "You're always asking me for money and then wasting it on drugs. You need to stop being so irresponsible!"

Could be worded: "I care about you deeply, and I have noticed that when I give you money, it sometimes ends up supporting your addiction rather than helping you build stability. Moving forward, I will not be providing cash, but I am happy to help in other ways like buying groceries directly or helping you budget".



Boundary Examples

Setting a Safety Boundary:

Instead of: "If you ever bring drugs into this house again, I will never see you again!"

Could be worded: "Our home needs to be a safe and legal space for everyone living here. If substances are brought into the house again, I will need to ask you to find another place to stay until you are ready to respect this boundary. This is not about punishing you—it is about maintaining a healthy environment."



Remember

Healthy boundaries are an act of love—both for yourself and your loved one struggling with addiction.

By refusing to participate in destructive patterns, you create space for genuine healing and growth. Your loved one may not appreciate boundaries initially, but in time, clear boundaries provide structure and consistency.



Resources

National Association of Children of Alcoholics (NACOA):(<https://nacoa.org.uk/>)– Providing information, advice and support for everyone affected by a parent's drinking.

Al-Anon Family Groups: (<https://al-anon.org>) – Support for families and friends of alcoholics.

Addiction Family Support:
(<https://addictionfamilysupport.org.uk/>) – Supporting people affected or bereaved by a loved ones addiction.

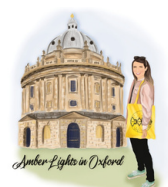


About me

Amber Hughes BEM

Following the loss of my sister Hannah in 2017 after she battled addiction and experienced homelessness, I wanted to make change in Hannahs memory. For the past seven years, I've dedicated myself to creating awareness around homelessness while supporting those affected by a loved one's addiction.

In 2024, I earned an accredited diploma in Coaching and Positive Psychology through the Andy Ramage Training Academy, alongside a Level 2 in Counselling skills enabling me to provide a safe and understanding space for those navigating the challenges of loving someone with addiction. In June 2023, I received the British Empire Medal in the Kings Birthday Honours for my work.



Work with me

Navigating the complex emotional path of loving someone struggling with addiction can be overwhelming and isolating.

My personalised one-to-one coaching sessions provide a compassionate, confidential space for individuals impacted by a loved one's addiction. We'll explore coping strategies, set healthy boundaries, and develop resilience and empowerment.

Whether you're a partner, parent, sibling, or friend, these sessions are designed to help you understand the dynamics of loving someone with addiction and create a path forward that supports your personal growth and goals.

Book a free exploratory call here



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