

Healthy Boundaries Cheat Sheet

For Self, Family, Friends, & Intimate Partners

Boundaries are not walls.

They are **clear agreements about what you will and will not carry.**

BOUNDARIES WITH YOURSELF

(The foundation of all other boundaries)

Healthy Self-Boundaries Look Like:

- I pause before saying yes.
- I notice when I'm tired, overwhelmed, or resentful.
- I give myself permission to rest without earning it.
- I don't use guilt to motivate myself.
- I keep promises I make to myself.
- I ask for help instead of white-knuckling.
- I choose sobriety-supportive environments.
- I stop self-talk that sounds like my old critics.

Red Flags to Revisit Self-Boundaries:

- "I should be able to handle this."
 - Chronic burnout or resentment
 - Ignoring body signals
 - Saying yes and regretting it
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BOUNDARIES WITH FAMILY

(Especially important for system-impacted folks)

Healthy Family Boundaries Look Like:

- I don't explain or justify my sobriety.

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- I choose what I share—and what I don't.
- I limit time or topics when needed.
- I don't engage in guilt, manipulation, or triangulation.
- I can love my family without fixing them.
- I leave conversations that become unsafe or disrespectful.
- I decide how and when I show up.

Boundary Language Examples:

- "I'm not discussing that."
 - "That doesn't work for me."
 - "I need to change the subject."
 - "I'll reach out when I'm ready."
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BOUNDARIES WITH FRIENDS

(Especially friendships that formed around drinking)

Healthy Friend Boundaries Look Like:

- I don't stay where I feel pressured to drink.
- I allow friendships to change or end.
- I don't over-explain my choices.
- I choose friends who respect my recovery.
- I notice when I'm over-giving or over-texting.
- I let silence be neutral—not rejection.
- I invest energy where it's reciprocated.

Boundary Language Examples:

- "That's not for me anymore."
- "I'll pass, but thank you for inviting me."
- "I'm focusing on different things right now."
- "I need more supportive energy around me."

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BOUNDARIES WITH INTIMATE PARTNERS

(Romantic, dating, long-term relationships)

Healthy Partner Boundaries Look Like:

- My sobriety is non-negotiable.
- I don't manage or monitor someone else's behavior.
- I communicate needs clearly—not through hints.
- I don't stay in relationships that undermine my healing.
- I take space when emotions run high.
- I don't confuse chemistry with safety.
- I expect respect, honesty, and accountability.
- I notice when I feel smaller or anxious—and pay attention.

Boundary Language Examples:

- "I need time to think about this."
- "That crosses a line for me."
- "I'm not available for that dynamic."
- "I need consistency, not apologies."

A QUICK CHECK-IN QUESTION (USE ANYTIME)

Ask yourself:

- **Does this support my sobriety?**
- **Do I feel safer or more drained afterward?**
- **Am I acting from choice—or fear?**

If it's fear, pause.

If it's resentment, reassess.

If it's peace, you're aligned.

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REMEMBER

Boundaries may feel uncomfortable at first—especially if you were taught to survive by pleasing, shrinking, or staying quiet.

That discomfort is **growth**, not failure.