

Union of Saints

When Outsiders Try To Control Our Family, What it looks like:

- Frequent unsolicited advice that carries judgment, not care.
- Rules or “helpful suggestions” pushed repeatedly after you’ve said no.
- Monitoring: showing up uninvited, trying to access private spaces, reading messages, or asking for detailed reports.
- Triangulation: they recruit another family member to take their side or act as their eyes/ears.
- Conditional support: affection, help, or resources are offered only if you follow their demands.
- Moralizing language: “You should,” “You people,” “This is how civilized families behave,” or invoking society/religion as authority.

Why people do this (common motivations)

- Desire for control or status — controlling others makes them feel powerful.
- Anxiety and fear — they think they know what’s “best” and want to fix perceived problems.
- Cultural or social assumptions — they assume their norms should apply to you.
- Opportunism — access to resources, influence, or insider knowledge.
- Projection — they’re imposing their unresolved issues onto your family.

Harm caused

- Erodes autonomy and decision-making within the family.
- Creates division and mistrust between family members.
- Emotional exhaustion, shame, and decreased resilience.

- Long-term trauma when boundaries are repeatedly violated.
- Practical harms (financial exploitation, legal risks, safety concerns).

Principles for healthy responses

1. Center your family's autonomy. Your family chooses values, rules, and who has access.
2. Distinguish help from control. Genuine help respects consent and boundaries.
3. Protect privacy. Keep certain matters internal unless you choose otherwise.
4. Be consistent. Boundaries must be enforced consistently or they won't hold.
5. Use community resources (trusted mediators, faith leaders, therapists, legal counsel) when needed.

Practical steps to set boundaries (ordered, actionable)

1. Name it privately. Talk with your partner/family and agree on what feels intrusive.
2. Decide the boundary. Be specific: e.g., "We don't accept advice about finances unless asked," or "No unannounced visits."
3. One clear message. Deliver a calm, direct statement to the outsider (use scripts below).
4. Enforce consequences. If the boundary is crossed, follow through: ignore, limit contact, block, or escalate to mediation.
5. Document serious breaches. Keep records if monitoring or coercion is happening (texts, dates, witnesses).
6. Limit information flow. Don't share intimate details with those who use info to control.
7. Seek allies. Trusted friends, community leaders, or professionals can back your boundary.
8. Repair family after conflict. Reconnect, debrief, and support each other emotionally.

Short scripts you can use (calm, firm)

- “Thank you for your concern. We appreciate it, but we’re handling this privately.”
- “I hear you. We’re choosing a different path — please respect that.”
- “We do not accept unsolicited advice about our children/finances/household. If we need help, we’ll ask.”
- “Unannounced visits are not okay. Please call first and wait for our invitation.”
- “If this continues, we’ll need to limit contact until respect is restored.”

If they escalate or won’t stop

- Reduce access: change routines, privacy settings, and who has keys or info.
- Use a neutral mediator for difficult conversations (therapist, clergy, or trusted elder).
- For harassment, stalking, or financial coercion: document everything and consult legal counsel or authorities.
- Protect vulnerable family members (children, elders, those with disabilities) first.

Language to use within the family (to strengthen unity)

- “We choose this together.”
- “Our home operates by these values.”
- “We love widely but protect what’s sacred.”

A short, shareable takeaway you can use in writing or a social post

“Kinder advice still becomes harm when it ignores consent. Love others with generosity — and protect your family with clear, compassionate boundaries.”