



A Discussion on How to Set Healthy Boundaries in the Peer Support Role

How do you set healthy boundaries with peers and yourself?

Something to Consider When Setting Healthy Boundaries.

- As a Peer Support Specialist, you may encounter situations where you may need to balance your own needs and emotions with those you are supporting. Setting healthy boundaries with peers and yourself is essential for maintaining your well-being and effectiveness as a Peer Support Specialist. In this discussion, we will explore what boundaries are, why they are important, and how to establish and communicate them in a respectful and compassionate way.

- Boundaries are the limits and expectations that you set for yourself and others in a relationship. They reflect your values, preferences, and comfort levels, and they help you protect your physical, mental, and emotional health. Boundaries can be different for different people, situations, and contexts, and they can change over time. For example, you may have different boundaries with your family, friends, coworkers, and peers.

What are boundaries?

How do personal boundaries differ from physical boundaries, and why is important to establish both?

- Boundaries are important for several reasons. First, they help you respect yourself and others by honoring your needs and feelings, and by acknowledging the needs and feelings of others.

Second, they help you prevent burnout and compassion fatigue by avoiding overcommitment, overinvolvement, and overidentification with the people you are supporting. Third, they help you create a safe and trusting environment for peer support by establishing clear and consistent expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

Why are boundaries important?

How do personal boundaries contribute to maintaining healthy relationships?

- Establishing boundaries requires self-awareness, honesty, and assertiveness. To do this, you must first understand your own needs, feelings, values, and limits. Then, you want to be honest and direct in expressing and maintaining your boundaries without being aggressive or passive. To establish boundaries, identify what you are comfortable and uncomfortable with, communicate your boundaries to those you are supporting with clear and direct language while listening to their feedback and concerns. You may try to negotiate or compromise but be careful not to sacrifice your core values or well-being in the process. Finally, enforce your boundaries by following through with your actions and words and be consistent in upholding them. If someone crosses or violates your boundaries, address the issue calmly and respectfully. If the issue persists or escalates, seek help from a supervisor or a colleague.

How can we establish boundaries?

What are some effective strategies for communicating and establishing boundaries in various relationships?

- Respecting boundaries means being aware of and honoring the boundaries of others, as well as your own. It also means adjusting to the changing needs and situations of the people you are supporting. To achieve this, it's important to ask for permission before offering advice, feedback, or assistance. Additionally, listen actively and pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues. Do not interrupt or judge and keep confidential information private unless given permission or there is a risk of harm. Lastly, be aware of your role and scope as a peer supporter and refer to other resources if needed.

How to respect boundaries?

What are some common signs or behaviors that indicate someone is respecting your boundaries, and how can we reinforce this mutual respect in our interactions?

- Adjusting boundaries requires being flexible and responsive to the changing needs and situations of yourself and the people you are supporting, as well as being open to feedback and learning from your experiences. To do this, check in regularly to monitor your own feelings and reactions, and ask the person how they are feeling and what they need. Additionally, seek feedback from the person you're supporting and be open to constructive criticism. Furthermore, seek guidance from your supervisor, colleagues, or mentors, and join a peer support network or community of practice to share challenges and successes.

How to adjust boundaries?

What factors should be considered when deciding to adjust personal boundaries in different situations or relationships?

Here's what else to consider

- “Healthy boundaries are not walls. They are gates and fences that allow you to enjoy the beauty of your own garden.” — Lydia Hall
- "Compassionate people ask for what they need. They say no when they need to, and when they say yes, they mean it. They're compassionate because their boundaries keep them out of resentment." — Brené Brown

Thank you!