

Boundaries: clear, respectful choices | Understand

A Limit, a Request, and a Choice

Adults and caregivers | 5 to 8 minutes | Handout

Distinguish what you can ask for from what you can choose to do.

A boundary can help you clarify what you are available for and what you need to protect. It does not give you control over another person's feelings or decisions.

How to use this page

Read the three distinctions. Think of an ordinary situation involving time, energy, space, or information. You may keep the situation private.

Your limit

A limit describes your availability or a condition you need, such as time to rest before another task. It may be temporary or depend on the situation. You can care about someone and still have a limit. You do not need to prove that your exhaustion is severe enough.

Your request

A request asks another person for an action. They may agree, decline, or offer an alternative. Clear wording can help them understand you, but it cannot guarantee a respectful response. A request is different from threatening punishment to force agreement.

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Your next choice

Consider an action within your control if the situation continues, such as ending a call or asking for help. Real choices can be constrained by money, work, caregiving, or safety. If stating a limit could lead to retaliation, seek private support and consider safer options before speaking.

1. One situation where I want to clarify my availability or ask for a change**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

Do not imply that people cause mistreatment by having weak boundaries. Validate constraints and safety needs. Assertive communication is an option, not a moral obligation.

About this resource

AI-assisted original draft for More Than Therapy. Version 1.0. Source and editorial checks: 27 October 2026. Independent clinical review pending; no human clinical reviewer is recorded. The references below inform concepts and do not validate or endorse this original page.

Conceptual references

PB06 | Centre for Clinical Interventions, Government of Western Australia | Assertiveness: Improving Assertiveness Self-Help Resources

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<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Assertiveness>

PB07 | Department of Health, Government of Western Australia | Assertive Communication

https://www.health.wa.gov.au/sitecore/content/Healthy-WA/Articles/A_E/Assertive-communication