Values and Boundaries - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about values and boundaries while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Avery limits extra work to preserve reliable participation at home.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore values and boundaries using an ordinary or fictional example? We can adapt it, observe, or stop." Ask what the person wants from the conversation.

Elicit before teaching

Ask: "How does this show up, if at all, in your own words?" Offer this idea tentatively: A boundary can support a valued relationship or role. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Link one limit to a chosen quality and draft a respectful statement with a realistic consequence or alternative. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Avery limits extra work to preserve reliable participation at home.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: What valued direction does this boundary serve? Avoid assigning motives or interpreting silence as agreement.

Respond to a mismatch

If the person rejects the frame, say: "Thank you for correcting it. What would be more useful?" Return to their language or choose a different approach.

Close with agency

Ask which observation, question, or support request the person wants to keep. Confirm a manageable ending and appropriate follow-up; do not turn a tentative possibility into a homework obligation.

Reflection

What would tell me to adapt, stop, or seek supervision?

Scope and adaptation

Values are personally chosen directions, not moral rankings or evidence of worth. Recognize structural barriers, disability access, and culturally varied meanings. Do not turn willingness into exposure to danger, excuse coercion, or prescribe one life path. These original exercises do not constitute a complete ACT protocol.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: Valuing as a Choice. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/recovery/resources/VAL-A08-3