



HOW TO...

set healthy boundaries with mom or dad

“A boundary is a limit or space between you and the other person; a clear place where you begin, and the other person ends . . . The purpose of setting a healthy boundary is, of course, to protect and take good care of you”¹

(Parkview Student Assistance Program. n.d.)

Healthy boundaries are boundaries that are set to make sure mentally and emotionally you are stable (Prism Health North Texas, n.d.)¹. Healthy boundaries can also help people to establish their identity, as they help people define their individuality and decide what they will and will not hold themselves responsible for. While boundaries are often psychological or emotional, boundaries can also be physical, and it is important to set physical and emotional boundaries when visiting mom or dad for both yours and their benefit.¹

Galatians 6:2-5 | NIV

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.”

advantages of healthy boundaries:

Healthy boundaries are an important component of self-care. That is because “in work or in our personal relationships, poor boundaries lead to resentment, anger, and burnout” (Nelson, 2016). A lack of healthy boundaries also leads to an unhealthy relationship – and by building loving connections with mom or dad, we hope for this to be based on a healthy friendship. Therefore, the advantages of setting healthy boundaries are the following, to experience greater well-being and fulfillment from your engagement with mom or dad and their family:

- Good mental health
- Good emotional health
- Influence others' behaviour: where people make decisions based on what is best for them, not just what other people around them want or need, which leads to
- Developed autonomy, which is an important part of self-care
- Avoidance of burnout
- Developed identity

It is important to note that in the case of building relationships with people who have children, boundaries are particularly important for the safety of the child, and yourselves.

how to set healthy boundaries:

In general, the key to setting boundaries is to first figure out what you want from your relationship with mom or dad, and setting the boundaries is then based on those desires, whilst being clear with yourself and others about your boundaries¹. Some tips to boundaries on are:

- **time:** when calling mom make sure you manage the time wisely that calls do not go on for a long time. Be respectful of mom's time. Also be sure to set times that mom can contact you, and when you are not available. Be sure to respect those times for mom and dad as well².
- **expectations:** Inform mom and dad about what they can expect from you. This will give you the freedom to direct the conversation with intentionality and it also helps mom and dad to have the right expectations of you. If they are needing more specialised help, be sure to refer them to specialists or encourage them to talk to their health practitioner. Do not bombard mom or dad with information but rather just be friend to check in and pray with them (if asked for). If they are not Christian, respect their faith².
- **ownership:** It is important that mom and dad own their own stories. Help mom and dad problem solve but do not try fix the problems for them. Only assist if you can, but do not feel the burden to financially or physically support if you are unable to. Only offer advice or solutions when asked for.²

referrals:

If at any point you sense in your heart that what you are hearing is more complicated than what you can manage, or that there is a mental and physical health concern, refer immediately. Please do not hesitate to contact Sikunye for advice on who or where to refer mom and dad on info@sikunye.org.za. Other options are:

- **The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)** is a useful website and you can send mom's name and telephone number on the online chat option for a counsellor to call mom for free. Please be sure that mom agrees for you to give her number to SADAG.
 - **SMS 31393 or 32312** and a counsellor will call her back – available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day
 - Call the **SADAG Helplines 0800 212 223, 0800 708 090 or 0800 456 789**
 - The **Suicide Helpline 0800 567 567** which provides free telephonic counselling, information, referrals, and resources 7 days a week, 24 hours a day
 - The Facebook page has FREE online **#Facebook Expert Chats** daily between 1pm– 2pm
- **Cipla Whatsapp Chat Line 076 882 2775** to chat online with a counsellor 7 days a week, 9am – 4pm
- **Cape Mental Health** provide a range of community-based services for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Services include assessment, referral, counselling, and support
- **Useful contacts** resource has a range of agencies and services to refer mom or dad to, should you be concerned about her/him or baby

¹ <https://positivepsychology.com/great-self-care-setting-healthy-boundaries/> (accessed 22nd June 2020)

² Adapted from "Coffee cup convo's: Skills for effective conversations." by Madz Deyzel