



Boundaries For Mentoring

Mentors are carers and have to particularly avoid burn-out through lack of boundaries.

We need to look after ourselves and protect ourselves by using boundaries.

Examples of boundaries:

- Turn phone off at night & keep specific hours for calls and activities
- Car lifts only for key needs – not a taxi service (unless it is a targeted activity by the mentor)
- Avoid long journeys unless there is a good reason
- Focus on the needs of the young person rather than on wider family needs, unless they directly impact the young person
- Identify manipulation – it is easier to be manipulated without boundaries
- Have a separate work phone
- Avoid doing what other professionals should do, by agreeing a joint plan and holding them to their duties. Get the professionals on our side, so they work better with us
- Family time is not crossed e.g. most weekends & evenings
- Don't give them money
- Don't give lifts to friends
- Don't give physical hugs
- Don't involve your family or personal information
- Be clear with a yes or no & avoid discussion that can lead to negotiations
- However, don't just say "no" before working out with them what they can do by problem solving
- Use food and drink as prizes & avoid precedents that they will expect
- Make goals clear

The test for boundaries is to ask:

Q. "Does it feel right to me? What is my gut feeling?"

Q. "Am I doing this for them or can they do it themselves?"

Q. Am I finding it difficult to say no?

All young people need to hear "no"

Exercise:

Q. What boundaries have you crossed, or are close to crossing, with your young person?

Q. Do you know which other professionals are involved with your young person? Do you know what their duties are? What duties are you doing that other professionals should be doing?