



Implementing Boundaries for Mentors

As mentors, it's crucial for us to prioritise self-care and establish clear boundaries to prevent burnout and ensure our well-being. By setting boundaries, we not only protect ourselves but also create a safe environment for the young people we work with.

These boundaries are essential to prevent any potential incidents or accusations and to maintain a safe and respectful relationship between mentors and mentees. Ultimately, by respecting and adhering to these boundaries, we can safeguard both ourselves and the young people we support from possible accidents or harm.

Boundaries you would need establish would be:

- **Phone usage;** Establish specific hours for phone calls and activities and turn off your phone at night to prioritise personal time and rest.
- **Transportation:** Limit car lifts to essential needs only, avoiding becoming a taxi service (unless it's part of a targeted activity agreed upon by the mentor.)
- **Travel:** Avoid long journeys unless there is a valid reason directly related to the mentee's needs or development.
- **Focus on Mentee:** Keep the focus on the needs of the young person rather than getting involved in broader family issues unless they directly impact the mentee's well-being.
- **Identify Manipulation:** Be vigilant for signs of manipulation and establish boundaries to prevent being manipulated, ensuring that the mentor-mentee relationship remains authentic and respectful.
- **Professional Duties:** Avoid taking on tasks that should be handled by other professionals. Instead, collaborate with professionals involved in the mentee's care and hold them accountable for their responsibilities.
- **Personal Time:** Preserve personal time, such as weekends and evenings, for family and relaxation, avoiding excessive involvement in mentoring activities during these periods.
- **Financial Assistance:** Refrain from giving mentees money, as this can create dependency and undermine their self-sufficiency.
- **Social Boundaries:** Avoid giving lifts to the mentee's friends or engaging in physical displays of affection, such as hugs, to maintain professional boundaries.
- **Family and Personal Information:** Keep family and personal information separate from the mentoring relationship to maintain professionalism and confidentiality.
- **Communication Style:** Be clear and decisive in your communication, providing clear yes or no answers while avoiding prolonged discussions that may lead to negotiation.
- **Problem-Solving Approach:** Encourage problem-solving and decision-making skills by working collaboratively with the mentee to find solutions rather than simply saying "no" to their requests.



- **Use of Incentives:** Use food and drink as occasional rewards or incentives for achieving goals, avoiding setting precedents that may lead to unrealistic expectations.
- **Clarity in Goals:** Clearly communicate goals and expectations to the mentee, ensuring they understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from the mentoring relationship.

Before putting boundaries, it is good to consider these questions.

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

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

Q. Am I finding it difficult to say no?

Boundaries serve as guidelines that define the limits and expectations within the mentor-mentee dynamic. Setting boundaries allows mentors to maintain professionalism, uphold confidentiality, and ensure the focus remains on the mentee's growth and development.

One of the key aspects of boundary-setting in mentoring is the ability to say **NO** when necessary. While mentors are often eager to help and support their mentees in any way possible. It's important for mentors to communicate boundaries clearly and assertively, while also providing explanations or alternatives when appropriate. By saying no, when necessary, mentors empower mentees to develop problem-solving skills, resilience, and self-sufficiency. Additionally, it reinforces the notion that boundaries are a natural and healthy part of relationships, teaching mentees valuable lessons about respect, accountability, and personal responsibility.

If you ever find it challenging to set boundaries or say no in certain situations, don't hesitate to reach out to your team leader for guidance and support. They are there to assist you and provide advice on navigating difficult situations.

Ment4's main approach towards the young people in our care is that we must treat them all the same and include them with open arms, regardless of their difference in backgrounds, behaviors and beliefs.

Signed: Luke Peters, Senior Operations Lead, Ment4

A small, square image showing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Luke Peters".

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