

Handout: Setting Healthy Digital Boundaries

Setting boundaries helps ensure that technology supports rather than disrupts connection. Setting digital boundaries as a couple helps ensure that your online habits align with your relational needs. This guide walks you through identifying communication styles, negotiating expectations, and maintaining respectful digital interactions.

1. Understand Each Other's Needs

Begin by exploring your individual preferences, habits, and triggers related to digital communication. These questions help build empathy and set the stage for shared boundaries.

Use these reflection questions as a guide:

- **Communication frequency:** How often do you like to check in during the day? What feels supportive vs. overwhelming?
- **Preferred platforms:** Do you feel more connected through texting, calls, or video chats?
- **Response time:** How soon do you expect a reply? How do you feel if there's a delay?
- **Digital triggers:** What online behaviors frustrate you? Why?
- **Privacy expectations:** Password sharing or access to each other's devices?

2. Co-Create Boundaries

Boundaries should support both partners, not control them. Use what you've learned to collaborate on balanced digital habits.

Tips for setting boundaries together:

- **Open the conversation:** Approach each other with curiosity, not criticism.
- **Find common ground:** Start with shared values, like no phones during meals.
- **Problem-solve as a team:** Set time limits, tech-free zones, or "check-in" times.
- **Stay flexible:** Needs evolve, so revisit your boundaries regularly.

3. Communicate boundaries clearly: Once boundaries are established, they should be communicated clearly and respectfully. This means expressing needs and expectations directly, without blame or accusation.

4. Respect and uphold boundaries: Boundaries only work if both partners respect and uphold them. This requires commitment, even when it's inconvenient or challenging. By consistently honoring each other's boundaries, you can strengthen trust and sustain emotional security with confidence and connection.