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Boundary Script Bank

Dignity-Protecting Language for Work



COUNSELLING

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Purpose of This Guide

Frontline settlement work often requires balancing care for others with the limits of time, capacity, and role. In pressured moments, communicating boundaries clearly can be challenging.

This Boundary Script Bank offers examples of respectful language that help you communicate limits while protecting dignity, maintaining connection, and supporting sustainable frontline practice.



This resource was developed by Breelove Wellness as part of the ARAISA Learning Series to support frontline settlement workers across Atlantic Canada. The information in this guide is intended for educational and professional development purposes. It is designed to help workers recognize early signs of nervous system strain and apply small, practical skills that support steadiness in demanding work environments. This resource may be shared with participants and hosted within the ARAISA Learning Hub as part of the ARAISA training series.

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Principles of Boundary Language

Healthy boundaries support safety, clarity, and dignity for both you and the person you are supporting. Clear boundaries also help reduce nervous system strain by preventing situations from escalating or expanding beyond what you can realistically support in the moment.

Healthy boundary language is:

Clear

State the limit in a way that is easy to understand.

Example: *"I am not able to stay after this time, but we can schedule a time to discuss this."*

Brief

Keep the message simple so it does not become confusing or overwhelming.

Example: *"I can help with this form today. We can talk about the other issue at our next meeting."*

Grounded

Use a steady and respectful tone that reflects confidence in your role.

Example: *"I want to support you with this, and we need to keep our conversation respectful."*

Try to avoid over explaining, apologizing for reasonable limits, or blaming yourself.

Instead of: *"I am sorry, I am really bad at managing time and I cannot stay."*

You might say: *"I am not able to stay longer today, but we can continue this tomorrow."*



Types of Boundaries and Potential Responses



The examples below illustrate common frontline situations where boundary language may be helpful. These responses are meant as starting points that can be adapted to your role, workplace expectations, and communication style.

Type of Boundary	Examples of dignity-protecting boundary responses in common workplace situations:
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I want to support you, and I am not able to take on another request right now. Let us look at what we can prioritize.” • “I may not be able to address everything today, but we can focus on the most important step together.”
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have about ten minutes left today. Let us focus on the most important step before we finish.” • “Our time for today is ending. Let us plan the next step so we can continue this conversation.”
Escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I want to support you, and I need our conversation to remain respectful so we can keep working together.” • “I can continue this conversation when we are able to speak calmly with each other.”
Support Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I need some guidance on this situation. Can we check in with a colleague or supervisor before I proceed?” • “I want to make sure you receive the best support possible. I am going to involve another team member who can help with this.”

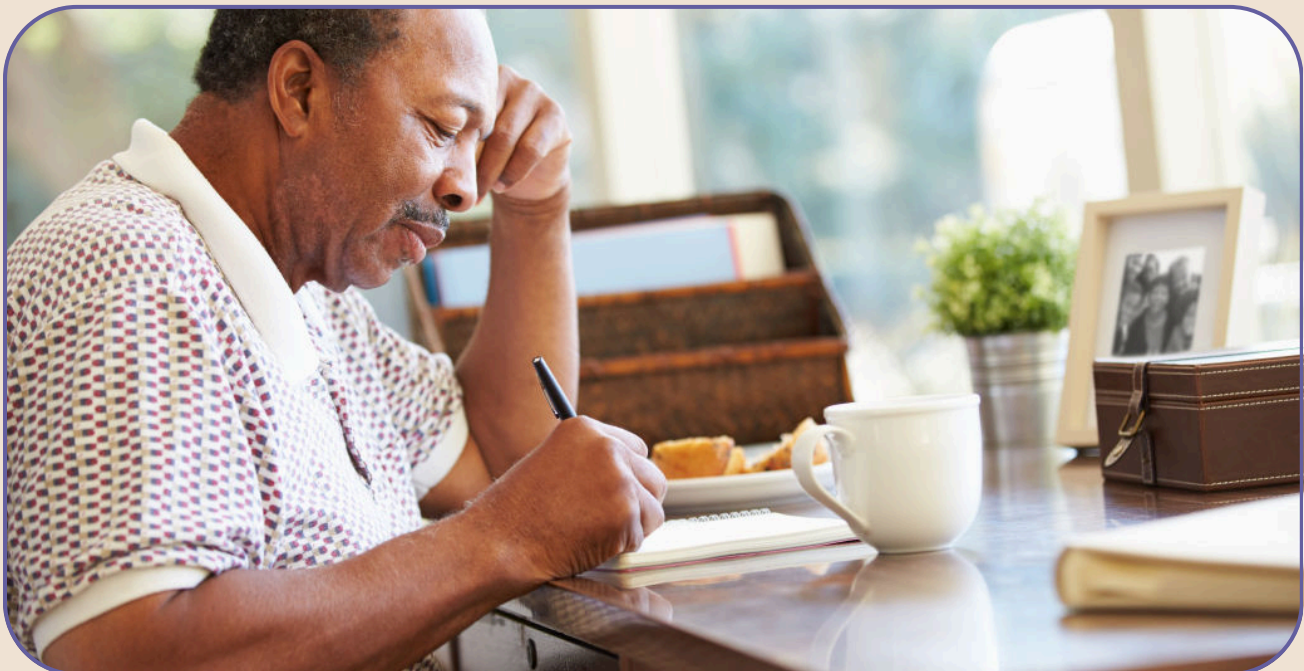
Affirmations After Boundary-Setting

Setting boundaries can feel challenging, especially in care-based roles. However, clear limits are essential for protecting your well-being and sustaining your ability to support others over time.

Try using affirmations such as:

- "I am allowed to protect my time and energy."
- "Setting this boundary helps me work sustainably."
- "I can care for others while also caring for myself."
- "Maintaining limits is a sign of respect for everyone involved."

These statements can help you normalize the experience, reduce self-blame, and strengthen your confidence in using boundaries as a tool for self-preservation and effective practice. Practicing clear and respectful boundary language supports both your well-being and the quality of care you are able to offer others.



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