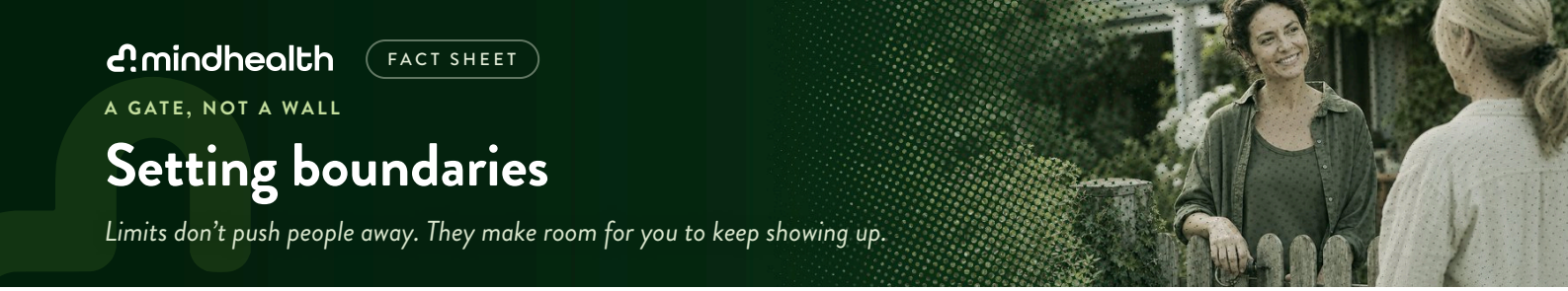
mindhealth FACT SHEET

A GATE, NOT A WALL

Setting boundaries

Limits don't push people away. They make room for you to keep showing up.



Your limits
What protects your capacity

Still connected
Care without over-giving

Said out loud
Kind, clear, and early

01 What a boundary actually is

A boundary isn't a punishment or an ultimatum. It's information about what you can offer and still be well. "I can't take calls after nine", "I need a quiet hour after work", "I'm happy to help Saturday, not tonight." Far from pushing people away, clear limits are what make long-term closeness possible: people know where they stand with you, and you stop quietly running on empty.

02 Why it feels so uncomfortable

If you learned that love was earned by being endlessly available, a limit can feel like rejection, yours or theirs. Guilt after saying no doesn't mean the no was wrong; it usually just means the muscle is new. Expect discomfort, not danger. People who value you adjust to a clear, kindly held limit surprisingly fast, and the ones who repeatedly won't are telling you something important too.

03 What genuinely helps

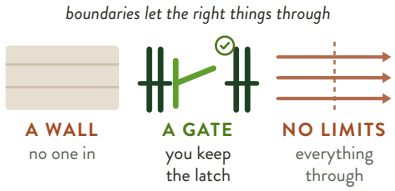
- Knowing your limit before you walk in
- Saying it early, before resentment builds
- One clear sentence, no long defence
- Offering what you can do, not just what you can't
- Holding steady through the first wave of guilt

A PRACTICAL STORY



THE GATE

A gate, not a wall



A wall shuts everyone out; no limits lets everything through. A gate lets the right things in, and you keep the latch.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

The kind no

1. Name the limit in one sentence
2. Add what you can offer instead
3. Resist explaining it three times

Clear is kind. Unclear is exhausting.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If guilt or fear makes limits feel impossible, or a relationship runs one-way no matter what you say, a psychologist can help. Ask your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan.

DID YOU KNOW?

Personal boundaries became a common idea partly through family therapy, including Salvador Minuchin's 1974 book Families and Family Therapy.

Minuchin, Families and Family Therapy, 1974

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

A boundary is not the end of a relationship. It's the maintenance that lets one last.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

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