Student Mental Health: Boundaries 101

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Student Mental Health Breakdown

- Two questions…
- 1 in 4 college students are diagnosed with a mental illness in any given year- stretched across person’s lifespan statistic increases to 1 in 2!
- Average onset for mental illness is between ages of 18 to 24
- Suicide is the leading cause of death on 4-year campuses- 1,100 college students die by suicide each year
- Median delay in getting help for a disorder is 10 years!
- Most mental illnesses are exacerbated by stress-college is stressful!!!
Boundaries

An inside job!

- Boundaries are not just about physical space, they have to do with knowing who we are and have nothing whatsoever to do with making others do anything— in fact, healthy boundaries have nothing to do with others at all!

- Boundaries start with genuineness— they have to do not so much with where others stop but instead with where we genuinely begin.

- Boundaries are guidelines or limits that a person creates to identify what are reasonable, safe or permissible ways for others to behave around them AND how they respond when someone crosses these limits.

- They are built out of a combination of beliefs, attitudes, past experiences and social learning.

- Personal boundaries define you as an individual, outlining your likes and dislikes and setting the distances you allow others to approach.

- They include: physical, psychological and spiritual boundaries— involving beliefs, emotions, intuitions and sense of self.
Healthy Boundaries

- Says “yes” or “no” without fear or guilt- acknowledges “free choice” decision-making
- Accepts “no” from others
- Shares personal information gradually in a mutually trusting relationship
- Expects reciprocity in relationships and shares personal responsibility
- Identifies when the problem is “theirs” and when it is not
- Does not rescue others from taking responsibility
- Does not tolerate abuse or disrespect
Unhealthy Boundaries

**Unhealthy or COLLAPSED Boundaries:**
- Unable to say “no” due to fear of rejection
- Exhibits a high tolerance for abuse or disrespect
- Absorbs the feelings of others
- Shares “too much info” before establishing mutual trust
- Avoids conflict at all costs
- Possesses no clear identity or sense of self

**Unhealthy or RIGID Boundaries:**
- Gives a “no” response if request involves close interaction
- Avoids intimacy at all costs & may sabotage relationships to do so
- Is very uncomfortable sharing personal information
- Has difficulty identifying wants, needs, or feelings
- Has few or no close relationships
Psychological Boundaries

**COLLAPSED:** A person with “collapsed” boundaries easily molds with other people’s boundaries—someone with a collapsed boundary can be easily manipulated.

**SPONGY:** A person with “spongy” boundaries is a combination of soft and rigid. They permit less emotional corruption than soft boundaries but more than rigid. People with spongy boundaries are unsure of what to let in and what to keep out.

**RIGID:** A person with rigid boundaries is closed or walled off so nobody can get close to them physically or emotionally. This is often the case if someone has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused. Rigid boundaries can be selective which depend on time, place or circumstances and are usually based on a bad previous experience in a similar situation.

**FLEXIBLE:** This is ideal. Similar to selective rigid boundaries but the person has more control. This person decides what to let in and what to keep out, they are resistant to emotional corruption and manipulation.

Group Activity: Role Play! Staff vs. Student 😊

Brown, Nina W., Coping With Infuriating, Mean, Critical People - The Destructive Narcissistic Pattern 2006.
Food for Thought:

- How would you classify your boundary? COLLAGSED, SPONGY, RIGID or FLEXIBLE

- Are your boundaries different at work, at home, or with friends?

- Can a person change the type of boundary they possess from one situation or atmosphere to another?
What are the Implications?

SMALL GROUPS

1. How do your boundaries affect your work with students? With co-workers? With your boss?

2. How do students boundaries affect your work? Does a student with a mental illness mean their boundaries might be poor?

3. What are some things you can do to build or maintain healthy boundaries with students, co-workers and your boss?

4. How does self-care fit into this topic?
Questions/Comments?

Please take a moment to complete an evaluation of this training online

Two Methods:

✓ [https://www.randsurvey.org/staff/](https://www.randsurvey.org/staff/)
✓ Or text CC to 24587 from your smart phone

Thank you!