

THE BIG PICTURE

- Personal boundaries are the limits you create between yourself and other people. Workplace boundaries are the limits within a job role and your relationship to the job.
- Setting boundaries, in both your personal life and your professional life, is a form of self-care.
- Setting boundaries is not selfish! Boundaries keep us safe!

Setting boundaries, especially for peer workers

and recovery coaches, can be unclear and confusing. There is often inconsistency in the definitions of peer workers and recovery coaches, and they do not always have clearly distinct roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of peers and recovery coaches can be drastically different from place to place. However, setting boundaries in both personal and professional settings is an important form of self-care.

Personal boundaries are the limits you create between yourself and other people. Some examples of personal boundaries include:

- We can text daily, but I do not want to text 20 times per hour.
- We can meet for dinner, but I will drive separately so I can leave when I want.

Workplace boundaries are the lines and limits within a job role and your relationship to the job. Some examples of workplace boundaries include:

- I will not transport a client because I am not an authorized driver.
- I will not work outside of designated work hours.
- You may have my office phone number, but not my personal phone number.

Setting boundaries in the workplace is particularly important for peer workers and recovery coaches. Think about the point of view of the participant. They are vulnerable, and as their peer support specialist you have more power in the relationship. Maintaining boundaries is important to keep you both safe and to demonstrate consistency, reliability, and trust.

It is important to know your role at work. Peer support workers and recovery coaches are not sponsors, therapists, physicians, or lawyers. They are also not expected to be stand-in family members for participants. Remember what your expectations are at work and what is beyond your role and responsibilities.

Peer Support Role

Is/Does	Is Not/Does Not
A person in recovery	A professional
Shares lives experience	Give professional advice
A role model	An expert or authority figure
Sees the person as a whole person in the context of the person's roles, family, community	See the person as a case or diagnosis
Motivates through hope and inspiration	Motivate through fear of negative consequences
Helps to connect the participant to resources	Provide money or a place to live
Helps participant identify goals	Mandate tasks or behaviors
Encourages, supports, praises	Diagnose, assess, or treat
A role model for positive recovery behaviors	Tell the person how to live their life in recovery

Image and text adapted from a training by Brook West, Training Coordinator at Voices of Hope, as a collaboration with the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center titled "Help the Helper: Self-Care, Boundaries, and Empowerment for Peer Support Specialists." To schedule this training, contact Voices of Hope at training@voicesofhopelex.org.

A clear job description, employee handbook, or list of workplace policies and standard operating procedures may be helpful in maintaining workplace boundaries. Know the chain of command in the workplace so you can identify who you report to and what the expectations are for communication and documentation. Finally, familiarize yourself with procedures around confidentiality (such as HIPAA) and required documents in the workplace.

Continued on reverse.

PEER 2 PEER: INFORMATION FOR PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS, CARE NAVIGATORS, AND OTHERS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING RECOVERY

Continued from reverse.

If work boundaries are crossed, begin by having a conversation with your supervisor or human resources representative to help gain clarity about your role and work goals, communicate concerns, and come up with solutions. Follow up with an email that summarizes the conversation to create written documentation. It is okay if your boundaries change over time. For example, if your workload increases,

you may choose to limit your availability on your work calendar to block off time to focus each day. Boundaries are based on each individual's level of comfort. Speak with your supervisor or human resources representative to find a solution that meets your level of comfort with the organization's expectations.

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