



Boundary Scripts (ND-Friendly)

Clear, kind, emotionally safe boundaries for real-life situations.

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Important note

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

A steady orientation

These are not scripts you must deliver perfectly.
They're not confrontation tools.
They're not about winning, explaining, or proving anything.

This guide exists because many neurodivergent people:

- over-explain to be believed
- soften boundaries until they disappear
- apologise to reduce backlash
- stay silent to avoid conflict
- freeze when words are needed most

The scripts here are **low-cost language options...** designed to protect your nervous system first, while keeping communication clear and humane.

You're allowed to copy them verbatim.
You're allowed to shorten them.
You're allowed to say less.

Boundaries are not arguments.
They are **information**.

1. A core reframe that makes boundaries safer

Boundaries are often taught as something you *assert*.

For many ND people, that framing is dysregulating.

A gentler, more accurate reframe:

A boundary is a description of your limits... not a demand that others change.

You are naming:

- what you can do
- what you can't do
- what you will do next

You are not responsible for:

- how it lands
- whether it's liked
- whether someone agrees

Clarity is the work.
Acceptance is optional.

2. What ND-friendly boundaries prioritise

ND-friendly boundaries are built to:

- reduce emotional labour
- minimise explanation
- lower relational threat
- avoid escalation
- protect energy and regulation

They aim for:

- **briefness over polish**
- **neutral tone over warmth performance**
- **predictability over persuasion**

If a boundary feels “too blunt,” it’s often because we’re used to padding ourselves for safety.

Padding costs energy.
These scripts are designed to cost less.

3. When you need to say no (without justifying)

You do not need a reason to say no.

Simple options:

- “I’m not able to do that.”
- “That doesn’t work for me.”
- “I can’t take this on.”
- “I’m going to pass on this.”

If you want a relational softener (optional):

- “Thanks for thinking of me... I’m not able to.”
- “I appreciate the ask, but I can’t.”

Avoid adding explanations *unless you truly want to*.
Reasons invite negotiation.

4. When you need time or space

Needing time is a boundary, not a delay tactic.

You might say:

- “I need time to process this.”
- “I can’t respond to this right now.”
- “I need to pause this conversation.”
- “I’ll come back to this later.”

If predictability helps:

- “I’ll check back in tomorrow.”
- “I’ll respond after the weekend.”

Time protects regulation.
You don’t owe immediacy.

5. When communication itself is overwhelming

You don’t have to keep engaging to be polite.

You might say:

- “I’m overloaded and need to stop here.”
- “This is too much for me right now.”
- “I can’t continue this conversation today.”
- “I need to disengage.”

You are allowed to step away *before* things escalate.
That is regulation... not avoidance.

6. When someone pushes past your first boundary

You do not need a new explanation.

Repetition is not rudeness.
It’s **consistency**.

You might repeat:

- “I’m not able to do that.”
- “That still doesn’t work for me.”

- “My answer hasn’t changed.”

If needed:

- “I’m not going to discuss this further.”
- “I’ve shared my boundary.”

Escalation often stops when boundaries stop expanding.

7. When expectations are unclear or unrealistic

Clarifying expectations is a boundary around **scope**.

You might say:

- “I need clarity before I can commit.”
- “That expectation isn’t realistic for me.”
- “I need this broken down.”
- “I can do part of this, not all.”

Partial capacity is still capacity.
Naming limits early prevents burnout later.

8. When emotional labour is being expected

You are not obligated to process others’ emotions on demand.

You might say:

- “I don’t have capacity to hold this right now.”
- “I can’t support this conversation today.”
- “I’m not the right person for this.”
- “I need to protect my energy.”

You can care *without* carrying.

9. When tone or feedback feels unsafe

You can set boundaries around *how* things are communicated.

You might say:

- “I need feedback delivered more gently.”
- “This tone is hard for me to process.”
- “I need this in writing.”
- “Can we pause and revisit this later?”

You’re not asking for special treatment.
You’re naming access needs.

10. When you need to change your mind

Changing your mind is allowed.

You might say:

- “I need to revise my decision.”
- “I can’t do this as planned.”
- “I’m reassessing my capacity.”
- “I need to step back from this.”

Updated information (including from your body) justifies updated boundaries.

11. When you don’t want to explain at all

You are allowed to be private.

You might say:

- “I’m not comfortable sharing details.”
- “I’m keeping this brief.”
- “I don’t want to go into that.”
- “That’s personal.”

Boundaries do not require transparency.

12. When guilt or people-pleasing kicks in

Notice common add-ons that weaken boundaries:

- “I’m sorry, I know this is annoying...”
- “I hate to say no, but...”
- “It’s probably just me, but...”

You can remove the apology *without* removing kindness.

Try replacing apologies with:

- “Thank you for understanding.”
- “I appreciate your flexibility.”

Gratitude acknowledges the other person without shrinking yourself.

13. Boundaries for work contexts (neutral & professional)

Low-emotion, low-explanation language often works best.

Examples:

- “I don’t have capacity for this right now.”
- “I need to reprioritise.”
- “That timeline isn’t workable for me.”
- “I can deliver X by Y... not more.”
- “I need expectations clarified.”

Professional does not mean self-erasing.

14. Boundaries for personal relationships (warm but clear)

You can be caring *and* boundaried.

Examples:

- “I care about you, and I need space right now.”
- “I’m not able to talk about this today.”
- “I need quiet time after socialising.”
- “I’ll reach out when I’m ready.”

Care doesn’t require constant availability.

15. When boundaries trigger backlash

Backlash doesn't mean your boundary was wrong.

Common responses include:

- guilt-tripping
- minimising
- anger
- withdrawal

You are not required to fix discomfort created by your limit.

A regulating reminder:

Discomfort in others does not equal harm done by you.

16. Choosing scripts that fit you

You don't need all of these.

It often helps to choose **3–5 default phrases** and use them consistently.

Consistency:

- reduces cognitive load
- trains others
- protects your nervous system

You don't need a new explanation each time.

You need a **reliable one**.

17. A simple personal boundary shortlist (optional)

You can copy this and customise:

- "I'm not able to do that."
- "I need time to process."
- "I don't have capacity for this."
- "I need to step away."
- "My answer hasn't changed."

One sentence can carry a lot of safety.

18. What this guide is *not* asking you to do

It's not asking you to:

- be assertive all the time
- confront people you're not safe with
- override fear or trauma
- explain less than feels safe

It's offering **language that costs less...**
so boundaries don't become another drain.

A closing permission

You are allowed to set boundaries:

- calmly
- briefly
- imperfectly
- without justification
- without apology

Needing clear limits is not a flaw.
It's an access need.

Boundaries are not walls.
They are **the conditions under which you can stay present without harm.**

Use what fits.
Leave the rest.

