

# SANE AUSTRALIA

## SANE Australia Mental Health Meet-Up

Date: 25/02/2021

**Topic:** Relationships: Maintaining boundaries when experiencing complex mental health issues

**Description:** A conversation about identifying and maintaining boundaries when navigating complex mental health issues for yourself or your loved ones.

Girasole (Peer Worker)

Welcome everyone to SANE Australia's first Online Mental Health Meet-Up open to the public! This is a new peer support service we are trialling. Because of this, we really value your thoughts on how it goes, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this event for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. Tonight, peer support workers @Girasole and @TidelsTurning will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of boundaries in relationships when navigating mental illness. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, you may find it important or helpful to have boundaries in your relationships. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversations may be heavy in nature as we talk about our mental health struggles and potential issues in relationships. @Jynx, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn together, and come up with some valuable ways we can learn to navigate boundaries in relationships.

Shaz51

Zoe7

Hello Girasole

👍 Sounds good.

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Shaz51

Zoe7

justme

blue&grey

adge

adge

Wally

BPDsuffer2021

adge

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

BPDsuffer2021

adge

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

adge

Zoe7

BPDsuffer2021

blue&grey

blue&grey

justme

Hi @Shaz51! Hi everyone! Welcome :blush:

Hi Everyone! :)

hello @zoe7 and @rosie93

Hi everyone

Heylo folks.

Hello 🙌

Thanks Girasole. I look forward to it

Hi @Zoe7 @Shaz

hi everyone

What's the structure of tonight? Voice chat or texts?

Hi everyone. Using Text as a means of communication is very challenging for me.

**We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join :)**

It'll all be text based @BPDsufferer2021- just like we're doing now :)

Sorry to hear that @adge - just try as best you can :)

Same as you adge

I am Dyslexic. I'm a capable Typist - Yet dyslexia & fatigue/ dissociation play havoc with my participation in Sane Forums. Makes it very difficult. Thanks TideisTurning

**Ok everyone! First question for today- what does a boundary mean to you in a relationship?**

Hi BPDsuffer2021

Placing limits on what you will and will not put up with and knowing your own limitations

This chat topic is great, but I think the way this is going to run is going to create more stress, So bye all

Wanting your partner to be up front and honest

wanting my partner to be upfront and honest with me when can't cope with my bad days

whats cool n not

justme

being able to take self care time and have shared time with partner, without it being taken personally...open communication

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

There's a lot of people joining us, so to update everyone, we're currently talking about what a boundary means to you. So far, we've had knowing your limits, honesty & open communication, self care & understanding :)

so88so

Being able to be honest on when I need time alone to charge my own batteries without taking it personally. Openly talk about each others energy levels and when we need each other or alone time.

blue&grey

Very much

Wally

respecting each others values

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Do you think of boundaries as important or necessary in relationships?**

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

I'd agree, @blue&grey :)

angerhad

My partner sleeps 15 hours a day with depression and is only interested in cuddles.I need more:unamused:

blue&grey

Not rushing to fix me all the time allowing time to heal

angerhad

Needing space for me is a boundary

Zoe7

Boundaries are extremely important in any relationship - and I think even more so for those with MH issues as it allows us to also know what our limits are and how we can be both supportive of others and them of us

justme

necessary but can be challenging to define without hurting feelings, requires building trust and can increase it too...

adge

Boundaries are respectful Limits placed on interactions - eg Please don't phone me after 8.00pm at night etc

so88so

I think that boundaries are a necessity. However, its not easy to know how to "set them up" or what are appropriate boundaries

Shaz51

hello @Bow

so88so

Its particularly hard if your partner does not respect them and makes you feel bad about wanting "time alone" or want to go out with you friends alone

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Next question everyone: How do you identify that a boundary should be established?**

Bow

hello @Shaz51

so88so

Thats a really hard question! :sweat\_smile:

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

It is @so88so ! For me For me, it's intuition, and when I realise a boundary has been crossed that I realise it's one that needs to be established. For me though sometimes, establishing the boundary can also be about compromises to also ensure the boundaries and/or needs of the other person are met as well.

adge

Maintaining or setting Boundaries is difficult - eg when someone recently overwhelmed me, he talked for 2 hours non-stop about Out of Body Experiences he had had. I left the conversation utterly exhausted. I need to set firm boundaries with this person in future. That was far too much.

Zoe7

When the relationship (whether it be with a partner, friend, family member etc.) is having an adverse affect on your own wellbeing - - then there needs to be open and frank conversations that lead to boundaries that everyone can adhere to

so88so

I don't think I know how to identify them. I guess something doesn't feel right at first and I'd have to think about it. It may take some time or a few times and if its still not sitting right, then I know something has to be done.

angerhad

My husband is mentally in a certain place and I can 't see him getting out of it although we do respect basic boundaries

so88so

The most difficult thing is that ... I didn't even know a boundary has been crossed until its crossed!

so88so

Then I'd have to really take some time to figure out ... hmm .. why do i feel something ... what am i feeling ... whats been done/said that makes me feel uncomfortable.

Shaz51

sometimes here too @so88so

justme

yesm it can be like a residue when a boundary has been crossed, of discomfort or what tha

so88so

Imposed guilt! That's it!

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

I'm hearing that this questions really tough! There can be a lot of imposed guilt or bad feeling and not realising the need for a boundary until it's crossed

Zoe7

Part of my recovery process has been in identifying and placing boundaries around some of my significant relationships - it has also involved those at work. It is by no means an easy process but one that has over time significantly positively impacted my life

Shaz51

very true @tideisturning and then you think what just happened

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Are there some boundaries you have which are unspoken, or you didn't realise were boundaries until they were crossed? What was the impact of when a boundary was crossed? How did you deal with it?**

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

I hear you @shaz51 & @Zoe7 :)

Bpdsurvivor



adge

Expecting respectful conversation from people, is an unspoken Boundary - Yet people cross that boundary, by treating me with disrespect.

Bpdsurvivor

I've had to learn the hard way with boundaries... I guess it's part of the BPD attachment issue

so88so

Probably my safe space - when I moved in with my partner it was particularly difficult. Like when I need quiet and alone time, the tv being too loud etc can cause me to have anxiety. I didn't know that it was a boundary and I'd question if this person is right for me instead. After a few fights ... and still learning .... I had to really explain how when I need silence, I really need it. In the end, we worked out a way. If I need that time away, I would put my noise cancelling headphones on and tell everyone and they will give me that.

so88so

Due to my co-dependence ... it has been a long road to learn how to create and even have boundaries

adge

When people (in person) speak to me with condescension, patronising or rudely - They have crossed the Boundary of Respect.

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

One example for me was about sleep. I once provided crisis support to someone very dear to me, but this occurred between about midnight and 4am. It was important that they had intensive support, but that really impacted me because I usually go to sleep by midnight. I realised that was an unspoken boundary that had been crossed, and I realised in the future I could look into other options if that happened again: linking them in with other support networks who are more awake, referring them to professional 24/7 crisis services, etc. My friend deserves support, but my sleep and mental health also need consideration :heart:

Bpdsurvivor

Agree

justme

my boundaries can shift from day to day depending on how im travelling, learning to negotiate n navigate this definitely takes practice n aint always comfy

Shaz51

yes @girasole , and there are other times , my husband is in bed by 9pm the latest so we come home from visiting early and people don't understand

so88so

Work as well. I use to work crazy hours as I didn't know how to say no to my manager. I was so stressed that I was not in a good place and it was affecting my family as well as I was snappy and not sleeping. It took me a while to realise that I had to establish a boundary and say to manager that I will not do this at 1AM in the morning and will not answer after 6PM

so88so

I agree @justme!!

adge

Chariities have knocked twice (2x) on my door during this Chat - Asking me for \$\$

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**How do you think your boundaries relate to your needs, everyone?**

Bpdsurvivor

I'm still working on healthy boundary setting. It's definitely hard work and doesn't come naturally to me. I moved from being co-dependant, to fearing any sort of relationship in case I get hurt. I've got a long way to go.

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Dis/respect is a big one! Also impinging on a safe space, overworking and boundaries changing depending on how you're going.

Bpdsurvivor

Boundaries keep us safe

adge

Boundaries help us to meet our needs - When there are no boundaries, or boundaries are crossed, then our needs are not met.

so88so

Boundaries allow us the balance and safe space we need.

Zoe7

For me boundaries are essential for both my physical and emotional wellbeing. I need space to be able to be on my own and not be pushed into situations I know will be triggering or difficult to navigate. Keeping those boundaries in place can be tricky but the more you do it the easier it becoes.

so88so

I agree!

Bpdsurvivor

Boundaries give us some sort of balance in life

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

I love that @BPDSurvivor - "boundaries keep us safe" :)

Shaz51

totally true @zoe7

so88so

Boundaries also prevent me from being passive aggressive or feeling resentment towards others.

Shaz51

@Girasole , still learning to say NO instead of yes all the time , we are getting there

SnowWhite

Boundaries can be hard esp when people keep walking over them

justme

boundaries can support defining what i believe in / ethics / how i feel about different spaces

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

That's a big one @Shaz51! Learning to say "no" can take a while to learn and get used to, but I find it's so important :heart:

so88so

I find that when I'm feeling good, my boundaries are stronger. But when my mental health is down ... the boundaries when its most needed goes down as well.

Bpdsurvivor

Sometimes I find my boundary setting too harsh, and that can also be detrimental e.g. asking someone to come at a particular time. If they come late, they've crossed the boundary....

Shaz51

@so88so , @girasole, @tideisturning , keeping the balance is hard sometimes

so88so

Me too @bpdsurvivor :(

justme

so true so88so

Bpdsurvivor

Working on healthy balance takes time

so88so

Me too. All or nothing. And its not just boundaries as well for me .

Bpdsurvivor

I find myself gravitating to the poles/extremes of boundaries/no boundaries...I don't like either

Bpdsurvivor

But what's good is that I know what's not working, so it's something I can work on with my therapists

Bpdsurvivor

Same

justme

sometimes i find setting a boundary requires witness / observer and when you or someone else is in distress / overwhelm this can be hard to access

Bpdsurvivor

Link didn't work

Bpdsurvivor

Unless there's an awareness of what's not working, it's hard to change

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

[@BPD Survivor you might like to have a look at this resource \(https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/relationships\\_personal\\_boundaries.pdf\) a bit later which talks about how boundaries can be too rigid :two hearts:](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/relationships_personal_boundaries.pdf)

Zoe7

That link worked

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

So in terms of need, boundaries provide balance, essential. They also help facilitate coping and come in handy as a prevention strategy. But they are really challenging, to develop awareness of :)

Bpdsurvivor

Perfect! Works now

SnowWhite

I sat down with my family and said dont buy me garbage food, dont offer it to me and if you must eat it or store it please do it out of sight of me, what happened my brother the next day bought me fish and chips

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

[\\*the link above didn't work, try this: https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/relationships\\_personal\\_boundaries.pdf :\)](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/relationships_personal_boundaries.pdf)

so88so

I have to leave now. Thanks for the chat everyone!

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

:arrow\_right: Next question, everyone: If all of your boundaries relating to mental health care were known about and respected by people in your life, what would that look like? How would that feel?

Bpdsurvivor

I don't think I'd feel human if all my boundaries were known and respected

SnowWhite

If my boundaries were respected then it would be a lot easier dealing with my eating disorder

Zoe7

Not sure how it would look but would feel empowering

Bpdsurvivor

I'm so used to having challenges, that without relationship challenges, things would feel odd

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

What do you mean 'not human' @BPDSurvivor?

deer

Sorry I'm late everyone. I think I'd have a lot less pressure if all my boundaries were respected. I would feel heard and more able to be authentic.

Bpdsurvivor

Hi!

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

All good @deer, welcome! :blush:

Bpdsurvivor

I find the process in dealing with these challenges has a lot of learning in it

deer

I thought I had to use a different name from what I use on the forums. Some of you will know me as Eth.

deer

Amazing to see so many people here.

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

That makes sense @BPDSurvivor :) It might seem odd the absence of that challenge hey? very insightful. Thanks for elaborating & sharing with us :)

adge

Hi @Eth/ deer

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

I hope that can change for you one day @BPDSurvivor. You deserve to have your boundaries respected :heart:

Bpdsurvivor

I'm reflecting on your question and cannot fathom a life where my boundaries are always respected.

Zoe7

I find that very sad BPDsurvivor and adge 😞

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Next question: How would you imagine having a conversation with someone about your boundaries and needs? (You might have one or more people in mind having such a conversation with)**

Bpdsurvivor

I guess ideally, I'd want open, honest communication

adge

Me neither Bpdsurvivor - That's never happened for me

Bpdsurvivor

@zoe7, I don't. It's the norm

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

Wow @deer that's an amazing idea, practicing with someone safe!

Zoe7

I have had this conversation recently with a family member and it was very scary but also very empowering at the same time. I made myself notes on exactly what I needed to say and what I would ideally like to achieve from that conversation - that helped.

Bpdsurvivor

I'd lay it all out on the table and tell them straight, acknowledge their point of view, but re-iterate my needs and desires

deer

I practice talking about it with someone else safe (who gets it) at times or write down what I want to say before tackling it with the person concerned.

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

I agree @Zoe7, these conversations are likely to be both scary and empowering at the same time :heart:

Bpdsurvivor

I used to tip toe around people, but I don't think I care anymore....just say it as it is (respectfully)

justme

a feeling arises, you sense, often emotional response, break it down, check it out and if it feels affirming express yesm where safe

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

practice and open honesty are great strategies!

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**and if you feel like people in your life won't respect your needs and boundaries, or if you're concerned about your safety, please reach out to services like 1800 RESPECT [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au), Relationships Australia [www.relationships.org.au](http://www.relationships.org.au), or Lifeline [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) :two\_hearts:**

deer

@Girasole it's not always possible tho', hence the writing. Sometimes I take a while and lose my boundaries before I realise exactly what I need.

Zoe7

agree TideisTurning

deer

I agree TideisTurning.

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

For me, because of how confronting it can be, I also try my best to keep my language neutral, so focusing on the situation and it's impact on me and avoiding saying 'you', as I've found people can get defensive with this. :)

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Next question: Do you anticipate any particular barriers or challenges to having these conversations kinds of? If so, what are some things to try to address those? Feel free to come up with suggestions as a group :blush:**

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

practice, open honesty & neutral language can be really important to communicating boundaries, which, once known might make things feel easier, empowering & take some of the pressure off!

deer

Sometimes I will tell the person I need to establish the boundary with that it's a problem I've had with someone else and that's what helped me realise. And sometimes that's true.

Zoe7  
justme  
**TideisTurning (PSW)**  
Zoe7

The inability of others to actually 'hear' what you are saying  
Loaded content and emotionality that shamozzle communications  
Fear is so relatable @Zoe7! It's scary!  
Personal fear and long standing inequalities in relationships

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

I think a huge barrier is emotion, because in the case of boundary crossing for example, there can be difficult emotion associated with that which may present a barrier to discussion. A way around that might be an agreement to come back to the discussion when everyone's had a bit of space and time to process everything- as I mentioned earlier, this can also be a boundary to protect and honour your need to feel what you're feeling. I'm wondering if anyone else has a way of overcoming the barriers?

Zoe7

Walking away when it gets too much and having space for everyone to calm down

deer

I have found that certain people (like my mum) will just not hear me despite trying different ways to get my message across. In that case a whole other boundary comes into play, where I cease to engage with them on anything personal to me.

deer

Another thing I sometimes do is have in mind a time limit for trying to discuss my need. Or if, say, I've tried 3 different ways to say it then I stop trying.

Zoe7

Agree justme

justme

Language and how its used can play a pretty crucial role

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Next question: Is there anyone in your life you feel you have a positive relationship with where you are both aware of and respect each others' boundaries? How did you get to this point?**

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

@deer it's good to know when to disengage! Otherwise you might be trying to have the same conversation with someone endlessly if they are not responding to what you're saying about your needs

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Some ways around the boundaries might be to stop engaging, walk away and/or give it some time & space and careful use of language

deer

Yes. My adult child (now 32, I am 57). It took us many years to reach this point but nowadays we really hear each other and behave respectfully of each other's needs.

Shaz51

hello @eth , @deer xx

Bpdsurvivor

With my therapist. The relationship I developed with him was for me to practice healthy relationships outside including open communication, boundary setting, honesty

Zoe7

I have a much better relationship with my mother after 'confronting' her a while ago. Re-inforcing those boundaries when she begins to cross them or walking away when that begins to happen has helped. I am much more aware from an earlier stage of the effect it will have on both of us so let her know I need space and will talk to her at a later time.

justme

My partner, but its in process, gets messy some days, however there's a willingness there to participate and yesm listen, trust built up over discussions and situations navigated, its not a neat finished thang

Bpdsurvivor

Therapy was a practise ground for the real world

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

For me I think it's been about valuing respect in relationships and only becoming close with others who also have strong values around respect. So it then becomes quite natural that we can talk about boundaries, and have them be respected :) It is a process that takes time, though, forming such relationships

deer

Hi @Shaz51! And @Adge and @Zoe7. I must say I have a really good communication that goes both ways with both my psychologist and psychiatrist since I've been seeing them both for over 3 years now. And my GP too.

Shaz51

yes me too @deer/ @eth

Zoe7

It makes it harder when the person you are setting those boundaries with have not been able to do so for themselves in their relationships throughout life - that adds extra time (and patience) to get across what you need and for them to be able to 'hear' you.

deer

I'm in a newish friendship (around 6 months) and it's still a work in progress for us both, but we do really hear each other and adjust our ways to accommodate each other's needs. Possibly the most open and supportive friendship I've ever had.

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Ok everyone, we're slowly coming towards the end of our time here tonight. Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? Feel free to share! :blush:**

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Reenforcing crossed boundaries, patience, using therapy as a 'practice ground for the real world'! :)

Zoe7

It has been a useful introduction to this format for SANE. Haven't learnt much to be honest but it still has had some great interactions.

deer

It's definitely still a process that's evolving in my life too @Zoe7. I have a rough history when it comes to all types of relationship/friendship, but it's the commitment to learning that counts.

Zoe7

Agree dee/eth 😊

adge

Applause @Zoe7 Absolutely right - Time & patience

Bpdsurvivor

@girasole, the link to the excerpt on personal boundaries was FANTASTIC! totally makes sense about rigid, porous and healthy boundaries. That's my takeaway for tonight. I've got a lot of work ahead in creating healthy boundaries for healthy relationships.

deer

I'm not sure how this format is better than Topic Tuesday discussions, and hoping the different name I used here doesn't mean I've started a whole new account with SANE.

Shaz51

It's definitely still a process that's evolving in my life too, same here @deer, @zoe7, @girasole, @tideisturning, with my mr shaz , over the last 14 years it is getting better , still some ups and down but soo much better than before

justme

Yesm practice n intentions...thanks folks

justme

All new here L plates but great topic

Zoe7

I like this format better than Topic Tuesday discussions as it is more instantaneous and you can follow better.

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

**Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? :heart:**

deer

Make myself some healthy dinner.

Shaz51

all good here @girasole , going to have a cuppa

Zoe7

All good here Girasole 👍 No self-care needed.

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

If you'd like to learn more about healthy personal boundaries, you can check out this resource from Relationships Australia, "How to Set Boundaries in Relationships" <https://www.raq.org.au/blog/how-set-boundaries-relationships>

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

We'd like to invite you to complete a survey reflecting on your experience in this Online Mental Health Meet-Up. As we're trialling this service, we'd love to hear any feedback you may have. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Please click this link [https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0eO4aalelrzyu7s](https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0eO4aalelrzyu7s)

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

I'm just going to take it easy for the rest of the evening! :)

Zoe7

Will do Girasole - lots to discuss about tonight ...some positive and some needing work but overall a great start.

deer

Will there be a thread on the LE Forum so we can keep discussing this afterwards or tomorrow?

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

Take care and have a good night everyone :blush: :heart:

Shaz51

that is a great idea @eth/ Deer

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Feel free to start one @Deer!! :D

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion. If you'd like to be informed when our next Online Mental Health Meet-Up will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here <https://www.sane.org/peer-support/online-mental-health-meet-up>

deer

I'm not going to get online tomorrow most likely, have a busy day. How do you feel about starting it @Shaz51 or @Zoe7 and tagging me?

Shaz51

survey done @girasole, @tideisturning

Zoe7

Girasole - are we already on that mailing list because of our signing up and participating tonight?

Shaz51

I will help you too @deer

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

Thanks so much @shaz51! :)

Zoe7

Not participating t in the forum at present deer so might leave that up to Shaz51

deer

tagging me as @Eth

Zoe7

You too deer/eth 💕

deer

Ok @zoe7. Take care of you my friend.

deer

Thanks all from me too.

Zoe7

Thank you Girasole, TideisTurning, pipinya and Jynx - and all participants tonight 😊

Shaz51

@Tideisturning, can I and you work on a introduction by email xx

**Girasole (Peer Worker)**

@Zoe7 to sign up to be on the mailing list for future groups, click here <https://www.sane.org/peer-support/online-mental-health-meet-up> and scroll down to "Join our mailing list for group chat updates" :)

adge

Thanks all from me as well...

Zoe7

Done Girasole 😊

adge

Yep I already did that Girasole - I'm on the mailing list

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

@Shaz51 a forum discussion would be great! I trust you'll have a great way of getting it going :)

deer

How do we leave the room?

Bpdsurvivor

@shaz51, sounds like full faith and trust has been placed on you!

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

@Deer- just click on your profile at the top & click log out :) Thanks for joining us!

deer

I can't see my profile on this page

**TideisTurning (PSW)**

All good @Deer. We'll be closing the room soon anyway :)