KHSCwellness

How to Set Boundaries with a High Conflict Person

MINDFUL MOMENTS

"Boundaries define our limits and protect our inner peace."
– Brené Brown, Rising Strong (2015)

Establishing and maintaining boundaries is essential for psychological health and safety.

Acting as protective barriers, these limits delineate acceptable behaviour in personal and professional life, fostering autonomy and well-being balance.

Clear boundaries create a framework promoting self-respect and mutual respect, reducing conflicts, burnout, and stress. They communicate priorities, values, and needs, fostering a supportive environment for positive psychological well-being. Embracing healthy boundaries empowers individuals, nurturing security, enhancing mental resilience, and creating a psychologically safe space for individuals and teams to thrive.

Setting healthy boundaries with a high conflict person can be very difficult to establish, but it is a critical step in managing the situation and getting what you want. Here are some tips for setting healthy boundaries:

1. Clarify Expectations
Before setting boundaries, it's important to have a clear understanding of what you expect from the other person. This can involve identifying specific behaviors that are causing conflict or frustration and considering what you need in order to feel safe and respected. For example, if a high conflict person is constantly disrespectful in their interactions with you, you may need to set a boundary by saying that they are being disrespectful or stopping the conversation to protect yourself.

2. Be Direct and Specific
When setting boundaries, it is important to be direct and specific, as this helps to ensure that the other person understands your expectations. For example, instead of saying "Can you please stop calling me so much?" try saying "I need to set a boundary and I would appreciate it if you could limit your texts to between 9am and 5pm." This helps to reduce confusion and opens up communication.

3. Use "I" Statements
Using "I" statements is a non-confrontational way to express your boundaries and promote open communication. For example, instead of saying "You need to stop calling me so much," try saying "I need to set a boundary and I feel uncomfortable when I receive calls from you outside of normal working hours." This helps to reduce defensiveness and promote open communication.

4. Be Consistent
Consistency is key when setting boundaries with high conflict people. It is important to enforce your boundaries and follow through with the consequences you have established, as this helps to demonstrate that you are serious about the boundaries you have set. For example, if you have set a time boundary that you will only respond to calls between 9am and 5pm, it is important to stick to this and not respond to calls outside of these hours, even if the high conflict person becomes upset.

5. Seek Support
If you are having difficulty setting and maintaining boundaries with a high conflict person, consider seeking outside support from your manager or HR. They can provide guidance and support to help you with establishing the Be Real policy in the workplace.

6. Be Prepared for Resistance
High conflict people may resist your attempts to set boundaries, but it is important to remain firm and consistent. You may need to repeat your boundaries multiple times or enforce consequences to help them understand the importance of respecting your boundaries. It is also important to remember that setting boundaries takes time and patience, and it may not happen overnight.