

Handout 2

Task 1: Review

Fill in the spaces below based on Golden Rule #4.

In order to keep your own opinions and biases in check, you need to make sure you...

What are boundaries?

Boundaries are important because...

Three types of boundaries are:

Task 2: A Closer Look

Bri and Neta

Complete this task on a separate page.

Step 1: Choose one of the following quotations.

Step 2: Explain why your chosen quotation is a good example of Golden Rule #4: Know Your Role.

Step 3: Provide at least two reasons as support.

- a) “I didn’t need someone to tell me it’s going to be okay. I didn’t need someone to offer solutions. I needed the validation of somebody being in that room with me, seeing me not okay, and for that to be okay.”
- b) “I didn’t feel like I had to do anything different. I just had to show up and be my normal self and be there.”
- c) “You asked for a lot of things, and I think that’s great. I wasn’t able to meet all of those needs, I wasn’t always able physically to meet them, and I wasn’t always able emotionally to meet them, but I was able to take a break while still being there. I was able to say, ‘What have you had to eat today? I’ll get us a glass of water.’”
- d) “You can get carried away in someone else’s emotions, and you have to be able to protect your own emotions at the same time.”

Erica and Liv

The transcript for Erica and Liv is provided on the last page.

1. What kind of boundaries did Erica establish with Liv? Provide examples.
2. Liv gives several examples of ways in which Erica was able to “be there” and support Liv in the ways that she needed to be supported. List some examples below:

Transcript: Liv and Erica - You still demanded respect

LIV: Hi, I'm Liv.

ERICA: And I'm Erica.

BOTH: And we're sisters.

LIV: I went into an outpatient program, the day program at the hospital. I couldn't be alive for myself. I didn't care enough about myself at that time to live for myself. So I clung to things I did love. You gave me a lifeboat because you gave me the love that I gave you, and more.

ERICA: I always tried to treat you with the same respect. Yeah, I was dropping you off at the hospital, and if you were being a pain to me I would always tell you that up front. If I made you a sandwich to go to the day program, you were going to the day program, and I was not letting you not get out of the bed. I made that a rule off the bat, and you definitely picked up on that.

LIV: And you held me to it too. There were days where I didn't want to go, I didn't want to wake up, I didn't want to get out of bed. And you were like, "Look I'm giving up my day to do this for you, to drive you there and back, to make you food."

ERICA: But I also tried to balance that with maybe giving you a little bit more space. I think it's a hard balance when people are feeling down and sick because you don't want to hold them too accountable, but you also have to balance that with being like, "No, I'm a person too and I have feelings too. You can't just completely exploit me to the point where it's taking a toll on my mental health."

LIV: You never pretended to be my therapist, you never pretended to be my mom. You were always my sister first and foremost, and my support that I could lean on. And we would talk about times where my

mom was doing her mom role as my support. We'd be like, "Yeah, Mom's being really annoying." And we'd laugh about that and just be like, "Oh my gosh." You were very compassionate towards me which is really important because I never wanted to hurt you. I never wanted to hurt anyone, which I think people can forget sometimes. People will think that someone who's sick, their actions might be malicious in some way. But at least for me, it was never meant to be malicious. I just had so much pain inside me that I didn't know how to handle it, and I was scared. If you back a dog into a corner, they're going to bark and bite, so you gave me that space that I needed. You never made me feel cornered which made it easier for me to open up to you. And you understood I couldn't think about your feelings at that time because I was so overwhelmed, but you still made sure to take care of yourself. You still demanded respect from me. Which I think is really important too, and I think it's a piece that a lot of people forget about being there for someone, is that you are still a person.

ERICA: I was lucky enough that summer to be in a position where I had time and I had energy and my mental health was in a pretty good place. Yeah it was hard, I'm not going to lie and say it was a walk in the park and it was just as easy as being your sister now. It was a really hard time for me and for us. In my role that I took on with you, I always put myself first. You were a very close second. Does that make sense? I know it's cheesy to say, but you can't really love someone else unless you love yourself.

LIV: In being there for me you trained me how to be there for other people. Like, whenever I'm there for someone else now. I'm like, "How would Erica handle this? How does she do it?"