

Holding the Whole Family

Boundaries, Loyalty, & Love in Kinship Care

Here
Now

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Here Now Health

BOUNDARIES, LOYALTY & LOVE IN KINSHIP CARE

First and Foremost

Kinship care is love + complexity

You are navigating family, not just parenting

If this feels hard...
it's because it is!



You're holding more than one role

- ✓ Caregiver
- ✓ Family Member
- ✓ Mediator
- ✓ Protector



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The Reality

**You are showing up for a child while staying in
relationship with the people who couldn't**

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You're holding 3 relationships

3

Not all needs can be met at the same time.



CHILD



BIRTH PARENT



EXTENDED
FAMILY

What Boundaries Are (And Aren't)

BOUNDARIES ARE

- Protection
- Clarity
- Stability

BOUNDARIES ARE NOT

- Punishment
- Rejection
- Being difficult

Why boundaries feel so hard

- Family expectations
- Guilt
- Fear of conflict
- “But that’s still their parent...”

***“In families, boundaries often feel like betrayal
—but they’re actually care.”***



What do I actually say?

“We’re focusing on what helps them feel safe right now.”

What do I actually say?

“We’ll take this step by step.”

What do I actually say?

“I hear you – we’re doing what works for their needs.”

What do I actually say?

“ We’re not ready for that
YET.”

When birth parents recover

It's not about what's fair

It's about what's safe and sustainable

Ask:

- Is the child ready?
- Is the parent consistently stable?
- What structure supports success?



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Helping Kids Hold the Truth

Introduce the both/and!

Kids can love their parent AND feel hurt

“They love you, and they had challenges that made it hard to keep you safe.”



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Real Life: Holidays & Family Pressure

You don't have to attend everything

You don't have to explain everything

You can choose regulation over tradition
(everybody must be regulated, including
you!) We can also make new traditions!



If You Remember Nothing Else

- ✓ You are holding multiple relationships
- ✓ Boundaries protect, not harm
- ✓ The child's needs come first
- ✓ You don't have to fix the whole family...

SPOILER ALERT (as someone who tried): **YOU CAN'T!**



LET'S TALK

- Any questions about anything I've shared?
- What situations are you navigating?
- Where do boundaries feel hardest?



We offer caregiver sessions to help families navigate this!

If you are interested, please sign up [here](#) and one of our Care Advocates will reach out within 48 hours to schedule an intake appointment!

