



STEFFEN
COUNSELING SERVICES

Creating Healthy Digital Boundaries as a Couple

Technology is part of almost every relationship. Phones, social media, dating apps, location sharing, and artificial intelligence can make connection easier—but they can also create misunderstandings about privacy, trust, and boundaries.

There isn't one "right" way for couples to use technology. The goal is to create **clear, mutually agreed-upon expectations** that help both partners feel respected, trusted, and connected.

Use the questions below to start a conversation with your partner.

1. Social Media

Social media can sometimes create uncertainty about what feels appropriate within a committed relationship.

Talk about:

- What kinds of interactions with other people feel respectful to both of us?
- How do we feel about interacting with ex-partners online?
- Are there social media behaviors that would make either of us uncomfortable?
- What does healthy transparency look like for us?

Our agreement:

2. Dating Apps & Online Connections

Dating apps can create complicated questions about exclusivity and commitment.

Talk about:

- What does being "exclusive" mean to each of us?
- When does using a dating app cross a boundary?
- How do we feel about maintaining old dating profiles?
- Are there types of online conversations that either of us considers inappropriate?

Our agreement:

3. Phones & Privacy

Being in a relationship doesn't necessarily mean giving up personal privacy. At the same time, secrecy can damage trust.

Talk about:

- What parts of our digital lives do we consider private?
- How do we feel about sharing passwords?
- Is looking through a partner's phone ever okay? Under what circumstances?
- What would help each of us feel trusted without feeling monitored?

Our agreement:

4. Location Sharing

Location sharing can feel reassuring for some couples and intrusive for others.

Talk about:

- Do we want to share our locations with each other?
- Would location sharing feel supportive, convenient, stressful, or controlling?
- Are there situations where we would want location sharing turned off?
- Are we choosing this freely, or does either person feel pressured?

Our agreement:

5. AI & Digital Emotional Support

AI tools can be used for advice, reflection, communication, and emotional support. Couples may have different comfort levels around these uses.

Talk about:

- How do we feel about using AI for relationship advice?
- How much personal or relationship information are we comfortable sharing with AI tools?
- Would either of us feel uncomfortable if the other regularly used AI for emotional support?
- When might using technology help us communicate—and when might it help us avoid communicating?

Our agreement:

6. What Happens When a Boundary Is Crossed?

Even couples with clear agreements may encounter situations where someone feels hurt or uncomfortable.

Talk about:

- How do we want to bring up a digital boundary that has been crossed?
- What helps each of us feel heard during difficult conversations?
- What does taking responsibility look like?
- What would help us rebuild trust after a breach?

Our plan:

A Few Things to Keep in Mind

Boundaries should be mutual.

Healthy boundaries aren't rules that one partner imposes on the other. They are agreements that both people understand and have an opportunity to discuss.

Privacy isn't the same as secrecy.

Partners can have individual privacy while still being honest and trustworthy with one another.

Trust isn't the same as monitoring.

Checking phones, tracking locations, or demanding passwords may provide temporary reassurance, but these behaviors don't necessarily address the underlying reasons trust has become difficult.

Your boundaries can change.

Relationships change, and technology changes. An agreement that works today may need to be revisited later.

If These Conversations Feel Difficult

Sometimes an argument about a phone, social media account, or dating app isn't really about the technology. It may be connected to trust, insecurity, emotional disconnection, past experiences, or unresolved conflict.

If conversations about digital boundaries repeatedly turn into arguments—or if trust has been damaged—couples counseling can provide a supportive space to understand what's happening and work toward healthier communication.

Support for Your Relationship

Steffen Counseling Services offers couples counseling for partners who want to improve communication, navigate conflict, rebuild trust, and strengthen their relationship.

If you're ready to take the next step, reach out to Steffen Counseling Services to learn more about couples counseling.