

A rigid boundary is characterized by decreased communication and lack of support and responsiveness. A diffuse boundary is characterized by dependency and overinvolvement. Diffuse boundaries interfere with adaptive functioning because of the overinvestment, overinvolvement, and lack of differentiation between certain subsystems. Rigid boundaries prevent a subsystem (family member or subgroup) from achieving appropriate closeness or interaction with others in the system. Diffuse boundaries promote enmeshment, or exaggerated connectedness, among family members.