

Boundaries

Group 1

What's a boundary in relationships?

- ❖ A “limit” or “space” between YOU and the OTHER person.
 - Like a fence in your back yard – separates you and neighbor.

- ❖ Who controls this “space”
 - YOU DO.

- ❖ What's the PURPOSE of a boundary?
 - To protect and take good care of YOU.
 - To promote respect for YOU.

- ❖ What makes boundaries closer or farther apart?
 - How much you trust the other
 - Physically
 - Emotionally

- ❖ Where did you come to have boundaries – or where did you learn them?
 - Early childhood – by watching our family – particularly parents.
 - Adolescence – family takes less importance and peers take over the teaching.
 - We learn how to define ourselves
 - We learn what our boundaries or limits are in relationships

- ❖ Having good boundaries means:
 - Getting to know ourselves – what makes us comfortable or uncomfortable
 - Depends on how much we trust the other (emotionally and/or physically)
 - Getting to know where we stand personally in relationships
 - We learn what brings us “peace” and contentment in a relationship
 - We learn to “let go” of others who bring us unhappiness

Characteristics of Boundaries- (What you feel inside):

Healthy Boundaries= Feel Contented/Satisfied Unhealthy Boundaries= Feel Restless, Unhappy

Feeling like your own person.	Feeling “incomplete” without your partner.
Feeling responsible for your own happiness.	Relying on your partner to make you happy.
Togetherness and separateness are balanced.	Too much or too little togetherness.
Friendships exist outside of the relationship.	Can’t establish and maintain friendships with others.
Focuses on the best qualities of both people.	Focus on the “worst” qualities of your partner.
Can achieve intimacy without chemicals.	Uses alcohol/drugs to reduce inhibitions and achieve a false sense of intimacy.
Open, honest and assertive communication.	Game-playing, unwillingness to listen, manipulation.
Commitment to partner.	Jealousy, relationship addiction or lack of commitment.
Respecting the differences in the partner.	Blaming the partner for his/her unique qualities.
Accepting the change in the relationship.	Feeling that the relationship should always be the same.
Asking honestly for what is wanted in the relationship.	Feeling unable to express what is wanted – can’t “ask” partner to give you what you want/need.
Accepting endings (kids grow up and leave, separation, divorce, death, etc.)	Unable to let go – clinging to old relationship.

Group 2

How do we SET boundaries?

1. **We need to talk/listen** (in other words, communicate) without blaming.
 - “YOU make me so angry.....”
 - “How could you do that to me after all I’ve done for you...”?
2. **Honesty.**
 - Avoid saying what you “think” the other person wants to hear.
 - Learn how to say what you “think” and “feel.”
 - Beating around the bush will not help you or your relationship in the long run.
3. **It is IMPOSSIBLE to set EFFECTIVE boundaries-
without setting ENFORCABLE CONSEQUENCES.**
 - **Never say something that you know you are not willing to follow through with.**
 - “If you call me bad names, I will walk out of the room.”
 - “If you drink/get high again, I will take the kids and leave.”
 - “If you are ever unfaithful to me – I will leave you.”
 - “I do not deserve this (whatever the abusive behavior) and I will not put up with it.”

MUST BE CONFIDENT ENOUGH IN YOURSELF TO DO IT.

4. **If your partner brushes off** your respectful request to do or not do something – he/she does not RESPECT you. This is a serious boundary problem.
5. **Setting boundaries is not about making “threats.”**
 - It is about giving others (partners, friends, etc.) choices and then **APPROPRIATE, ENFORCABLE** consequences for poor decisions they make.

Types of Boundaries: Comfort level is the determiner

1. Types of Boundaries:

1. **Material Boundaries-** money, car, clothes, books, food, toothbrush.
2. **Physical Boundaries** – personal space, privacy, body, handshakes or hugs?
3. **Mental Boundaries** – thoughts, values, opinions, knowledge.
4. **Emotional Boundaries** – are you OK with your right to have a variety of feelings?
5. **Sexual Boundaries-** what, where, when, with whom
6. **Spiritual Boundaries** – faith system, beliefs, connection with a higher power.

Quality of Boundaries:

1. Soft Boundaries – very little or no boundaries –

- Person can be manipulated very easily.
- Will do “anything” to please the other person.
- Cannot say “no.”

Based on “fear”

- Of rejection
- Of not being loved
- Of being alone
- Of looking “bad” in peoples eyes

2. Spongy Boundaries –

- Always feel very insecure and unsure of whether to let others get close or not.

Based on insecurity and lack of positive self esteem.

3. Rigid Boundaries -

- Closed or walled off from other people.
- Cannot get “close” to another – tend to be “loners.”
- Painful previous experiences.

Based on anger, fear, hurt.

4. Flexible –

- Person feels comfortable letting some folks in and keeping others out.
 - Can be selective with others.
- Is more resistant to emotional manipulations.

Based on positive self esteem and comfortable self-awareness.

How do we feel when our boundaries are violated?

- Angry?
- Disappointed?
- Unsafe – scared?
- Resentful?
- Cowardly?

Group 3 What is CO-DEPENDENCY? What does it have to do with boundaries?

- Can involve all types of relationships (friendship, partner, family, work, etc.)
- Codependency involves placing a low value or priority on what YOU need.
 - o All the focus and attention is given to the other.
 - What do they want.
 - What do they need.
 - o It doesn't matter whether I am satisfied/happy or not.
 - All that matters is that partner is taken care of.

Based on thinking/feeling that :

“I am not worth much if I cannot make you happy.”

See if you can identify whether there is a boundary problem here:

Situation:	Boundary	What Kind:	What is the Emotional
	Problem?	(Emotional or	Fall out?
	(YES or NO)	Physical?)	

Your partner scrolls through your phone calls.			
You are mad at your friend, so you go on Facebook and “tell” a embarrassing secret about him/her.			
You are afraid to say “no” to friends who want you to go joyriding with them.			
You stand there and watch while your friend shoplifts something.			
You bail your partner out of detention for the 3 rd time this year.			
Your partner disrespects you with bad name calling, but you would rather have this than not have him/her.			
Your friend wants to know that their “ex” said about them in your Sobriety Circle.			
You demand to know if your partner came into treatment or not – so you			

call and demand info.			
You walk into your counselor's office and say: "Hey girlfriend," how's it going?			
"I can't live without you."			
"I don't want you talking with your ex anymore."			
You hear about something happening in town and you get on Face book and tell your friends.			
You text your friends that your counselor is talking with a certain person.			
You bring your 12 y/o daughter into counseling with you as you talk about her father.			
You push your partner because they won't give you what you want.			

How to we set or strengthen our boundaries?

1. Name your limits.

- Where do you stand, what do you need?
- What's OK and what's NOT OK?
- What can your tolerate and accept?
- What makes you feel uncomfortable or stressed?

2. Tune in to your feelings:

- **How much discomfort do you feel?**

1 2 3 4

Really Uncomfortable A little Uncomfortable Comfortable Totally Comfortable

- **How much resentment do you feel?**

1 2 3 4

Really Resentful A little Resentful OK No Resentment at all

3. Be direct- not wishy-washy.

- Tell your friends/partner, etc. what you need.
 - “I need space.”
 - “I need to be close with my family.”
 - “I need to know when you’re going to be late.”
 - “I need to have my own friends too.”

4. Give yourself permission to set limits for yourself.

- 3 powerful feelings that sabotage our boundaries:
 - **Fear** of what the other person will do/way to our limits.
 - **Guilt** that we speak up or say “no” to a friend/family/partner, etc.
 - **Self-Doubt** that we even “deserve” to have our limits.

5. Practice self-awareness.

- Ask yourself:
 - “What’s going on that I feel so resentful?”
 - “What’s going on that I feel so angry?”
 - “What’s going on that I feel so stressed out?”
- Are you the only one trying to maintain healthy boundaries?

6. Consider your past and present.

- Did you have to put yourself aside for the benefit of your younger sibs as a child?
- Is putting yourself in 2nd place or sacrificing yourself , “normal” for you?

7. Make self-care a priority.

- Do you recognize the importance of your feelings and honor them?
- Is what you need and want less important than your friends/partner/family?

8. Seek support/help.

- Get help to practice setting boundaries with someone you trust.

9. Be assertive.

- Can you follow through on firm boundaries for yourself?
- Do you expect people to “read” your mind?
- Do you automatically expect others to “know what I want.”
- Can you respectfully tell another person when they have stepped over your boundary?

10. Start small.

- Start by setting boundaries with small things and then move on to larger.
 - Example:
 - Set your bedtime at 9 PM. (a small thing)
 - Set your limit of being picked up late at 10 minutes (a small thing).
 - Set your expectations of fidelity as complete faithfulness (a large thing).

Scenario:

You have had an argument with your friend who has started to be seen around town with your ex. Your friend gets on Face Book and starts talking bad- trasing you. Your ex has “told” them things about you and your friend makes them public.

- What kind of boundary violation is this?
- What are your thoughts about this?
- What are your feelings about this?
- What are you going to do about this?
- What is your response?

Scenario:

You come home from work and find out that your partner has invited his/her friends over to your home and they are having a party. You didn't know anything about this. Your kitchen looks trashed.

- What kind of boundary violation is this?
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Handout - Boundaries

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- ❖ Who controls this "space"

- ❖ What's the PURPOSE of a boundary?

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- ❖ Having good boundaries means:

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Healing Harmony – Conflict Management

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Ticket Group 1:

Welcomed clients to Healing Harmony – Conflict Management group this morning and opened session with the Serenity Prayer. Continued discussing how proper “boundaries” is essential to conflict management success. Talked about how healthy boundaries contribute to healthy and mutually satisfying relationships. Boundaries and respect go hand in hand. Poor self esteem and feelings of not being worthy of respect contribute to allowing boundary violations to occur without consequences. Discussed the types of boundaries:

- Material Boundaries
- Physical Boundaries
- Mental Boundaries
- Emotional Boundaries
- Sexual Boundaries
- Spiritual Boundaries.

Then shared in group discussion/processing the quality of boundaries (soft, spongy, rigid, and flexible).

Shared how drugs and alcohol affect proper boundaries.

Personal Note:

willing to share personal experiences with peers. Open to new ideas and change.

Plan:

- Continue work on understanding boundaries and how healthy boundaries assist in assertive conflict management.
- Encourage positive social skills and interactions.

Ticket:

Welcomed clients to Healing Harmony – Conflict management group. Opened session with the Serenity Prayer. Introduced the topic of “Boundaries” and how important these are for satisfying conflict resolutions. Examples of “healthy” and “unhealthy” boundaries discussed and group members identified personal situations which reflected either healthy or unhealthy boundaries. Clients then reflected and identified what “feelings” they experienced when a boundary was violated and/or respected by another. Good group sharing.

Plan:

- Continue looking at the types and qualities of boundaries.
- Continue encouraging positive self esteem and problem solving skills.

Individual Note:

willing to share personal experiences with peers. Open to new ideas and change.

Ticket –Co-Dependency

Welcomed clients to Healing Harmony – Conflict management and opened session with the Serenity Prayer. Continued talking about boundaries and the concept of co-dependency and how this character trait is always identified by the lack of positive boundaries and appropriate consequences. Clients identified behaviors of co-dependency they have used in the past when trying to accommodate family members, partners, etc. who disrespect them. Good group discussion.

Plan:

- Continue discussing and learning about assertive respect and self value.
- Continue encouraging practice of new skills in daily life.

Individual:

actively participated in group discussion and peer sharing.