



ACTIVITY: Creating Healthy Boundaries

Purpose

- Boost resiliency and avoid burnout by setting healthy boundaries with colleagues, family, and friends.

ESTIMATED TIME

15 minutes

MATERIALS

- Pen/pencil
- Boundary Exploration worksheet

Background

Personal boundaries are the physical, emotional, and mental limits we establish between ourselves and other people. Healthy boundaries allow us to maintain our own identity and respect the identify of others.

Clear and healthy boundaries are critical to living your vision and creating a fulfilling life. Both in your personal and professional life, a lack of boundaries will pull you away from being your best. Personal Boundaries are designed to protect and honor important parts of our lives.

This activity is designed to help participants reflect about people whom they may struggle to set healthy boundaries with and then identify strategies for creating healthier boundaries with these individuals.

Activity

- 1) Define “healthy boundaries” and their importance.
- 2) Discuss the following strategies for identifying personal boundaries:
 - A. Identify your limits** – Clarifying what your emotional, mental, physical, spiritual limits are. Do this by paying attention to yourself and noticing what you can tolerate and accept as well as what makes you feel uncomfortable and stressed.
 - B. Pay attention to your feelings** – Notice the three key feelings that are often cues that you need to set boundaries: 1) discomfort; 2) resentment; 3) guilt. If a particular situation, person, or area of your life is leading you to feel uncomfortable, resentful, or guilty, these are important cues that boundaries may need to be set or re-assessed.
 - C. Give yourself permission to set boundaries** – when you fear how a person will respond if you set or enforce boundaries, reaffirm to yourself that you do indeed have this right.
 - D. Consider your environment** – your environment can either support your setting boundaries or present obstacles to boundary setting.
- 3) Using the strategies listed above as a starting place, invite participants to complete the “Boundary Exploration” activity, found on page 3.

Discussion Questions/ Key Points

- What other cues let you know if you need to set or reinforce your boundaries?
- Is this something you would be willing to try?
- Are there some individuals that are more difficult to set barriers with than others? Why?
- Does this activity feel like it would help create a positive work environment?
- Try this at home also!

Let’s Try This!

Ask the group for volunteers to try this “experiment”.

Follow-up

Ask those who are willing to try the activity to discuss the results at the next team meeting.

Healthy Boundaries: The Why and How of Setting Them

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/great-self-care-setting-healthy-boundaries/>

How Successful People Set Boundaries at Work

<https://www.inc.com/dana-gionta-dan-guerra/how-to-manage-boundaries-at-work.html>

Creating Safe and Healthy Boundaries

<http://www.thrivingnow.com/creating-safe-and-healthy-boundaries/>

Boundary Exploration Worksheet

Think about a person, or a group of people, with whom you struggle to set healthy boundaries. This could mean that your boundaries are too rigid (you keep this person at a distance), too porous (you open up too much), or there is some other problem that isn't easily labeled.

Who do you struggle to set healthy boundaries with? (e.g. "my partner" or "coworkers")

In your relationship with the person you listed above, how are your boundaries in each of the following categories? Add a check in the appropriate column for each boundary category.

Boundary Category	Porous	Rigid	Healthy	Other
Physical Boundaries				
Mental Boundaries				
Emotional Boundaries				
Material Boundaries				
Time Boundaries				

Take a moment to imagine what it will be like when you begin to establish healthy boundaries with this person. If your boundaries are too rigid, that might mean opening up. If they're porous, it means setting limits and saying "no".

What are some specific actions you can take to improve your boundaries?

How do you think the other person will respond to these changes?

How do you think your life will be different once you've established healthy boundaries?