

SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

- A boundary is a rule or guideline that defines what we are comfortable with and how we expect to be treated by others. Boundaries can also help us understand what partners, friends, family members, and others are comfortable with.
- Healthy boundaries are essential to healthy relationships. It is a way to show that we know and understand our limits and ensure that our limits are clearly communicated.
- Boundaries can be divided into three categories: emotional, physical, and digital.
 - ◊ Emotional boundaries protect your mental health and well-being.
 - ◊ Physical boundaries allow each person in a relationship to know how much personal space the other person needs to feel most comfortable.
 - ◊ Digital boundaries define what is and is not ok when it comes to online interactions.
- Setting boundaries is important in all relationships - romantic or dating relationships, friends, peers, family members, employers, and other non-romantic relationships.
- Healthy boundaries should be based upon trust, mutual respect, consent, clear communication, and balanced relationships, among other concepts that may be important to the individuals involved in the relationship.
- An employer who “crosses a boundary” might be doing something illegal, such as not providing state-mandated breaks, not paying for overtime, confiscating identification documents, or failing to provide protective equipment. These types of violations should be reported to proper authorities, including supervisors, local labor tip lines, the Better Business Bureau, and local law enforcement.



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Learning Objectives

1. Expand awareness of healthy boundaries and how to incorporate healthy boundaries into in person and virtual interactions.
2. Identify five ways to establish healthy boundaries.

Materials

- *Safe or Sus* scenario handout

Guided Discussion

Use these questions to generate a discussion among team members.

- What does boundary setting mean to you?
- Are there ways in which technology can help us set healthy boundaries?
- How are boundaries and respect connected?
- How do you think that setting boundaries is comparable or related to consent?
- How do you feel about setting boundaries with adults who are only a few years older than you? Would that be more difficult than setting boundaries with younger peers? Why or why not?
- Think about boundary setting in terms of romantic relationships and other relationships (like family members, friends, or even employers) – how is it similar, and how is it different?

- How would you respond when your boundaries are repeatedly crossed in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe?
- How do you communicate with someone you know when they cross the line?
- How does it make you feel when one of your boundaries is crossed?
- How do you check in with yourself to know when a boundary is crossed?

Learning in Action

- **Safe or Sus:** Review the short scenarios on the handout. Students can categorize activities based upon whether they think the behavior is “safe” - nothing to worry about - or “sus” - suspicious, something that violates boundaries and trust in a relationship.

Connecting the Dots

- Strong boundary setting helps us form stronger relationships with clear, respectful communication online and in person. Understanding boundaries, and how to persist in maintaining those boundaries is an important skill.
- Most trafficking situations start with gradual breeches of boundaries before moving to more explicit and extreme tactics.
- Understanding consent and practicing boundary setting can help us learn to trust our gut and identify when someone is treating us in a way that is unsafe or compromises our own autonomy.

Reflect & Review

Have students respond to one or all of the following prompts (time-permitting):

- What are some ways you can practice healthy boundary setting?
- How can you help your peers practice good boundary setting?
- If you have a job, what are some ways to ensure that your worker rights are not violated?

Invite students to share their answers with the group.

Tips for Adapting to Online Delivery

- See “Online Delivery Tip Sheet” in the Facilitator Toolkit for more information about adapting your meeting plan to an online platform.

Facilitator Notes

Upcoming Meeting Dates: __/__/__

References

- [Love is respect – what are my boundaries?](#)
- [Psychology Today – Teach Your Teen to Set Emotional Boundaries](#)
- [Kidpower - Teen Consent and Boundary Skills](#)