



Building Better Boundaries **CMHA Facilitator Guide**



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Mental health for all

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Thank you,



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Video Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw0FRj5lw00> Part 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJHwsPA_L3Q Part 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz7aAoa8vsQ> Part 3

SESSION ONE

Introduction to Boundaries

Outline of Exercises and Activities to do during this Session:

- Name Tags: Have participants create Name Tags upon arrival to the group. Volunteers can assist.
- Introduction of Group Participants and Facilitators
- Take Attendance
- Group Expectations: Review
- Introduction: Where program comes from (Self Help Alliance, Guelph Ontario)
- Group Warm-up exercise: "Find Someone Who..." Bingo
- Paperwork (If required)
- Small Group Discussion: Signs of Ignored Boundaries
- Video: BOUNDARIES (Part 1): A Definition of what boundaries are <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw0FRj5lw00> Part 1
- Boundary Solutions Handout (Evaluation - finished in last session)
- Group Dismissal: Encourage Participants to return next week to continue their Recovery Journey!

Overview: Session 1

Session 1 will look at what boundaries are and how they can help to keep a person safe. The section also reviews the consequences of not having boundaries.

Learning Outcome

Completion of this **Session** will enable you to:

- ✓ Understand the general meaning of boundaries
- ✓ Describe ways boundaries can be beneficial
- ✓ Identify and evaluate your own boundaries
- ✓ Identify your boundary beliefs

Preparation:

- **Handouts: Find Someone Who**

Signs of Ignored Boundaries

Your Boundary Beliefs

Boundary Solutions

- Laptop and Projector/Screen
- **PowerPoint Slides: 1-4**
- Set up room with enough chairs – set in a circle - to provide for the number of expected clients
- Name Tags and Markers for learners AND staff/Volunteers
- Attendance Sheet
- Pens for learners

- Prepare coffee and snacks

Supporting Notes:

SESSION 1

1. Congratulate learners in finding the courage to join and attend the course!
2. Go over housekeeping (location of washrooms, fire exits and Muster Points, etc.)
3. **PP #1.** Go over group expectations.

Group Expectations

- This **Recovery College course** is closed. Only registered participants can attend. *Agency staff, students and volunteer Peer Mentors may attend as invited by facilitators.*
 - Confidentiality is essential to openness and trust within the group. People must feel safe in order to share. Anything discussed in the group stays in the group.
 - Members give each other their total attention. *Please turn off cell phones and remove earphones.* Everyone has the right to be listened to. Encourage others to talk and be a good listener.
 - Everyone has the right to pass. If you do not want speak, you are not required to do so, however we do encourage active participation in this recovery process.
 - Tolerance of our differences is expected. While in the group setting, behaviour will be overseen to ensure that all group members are respected.
 - Recovery-focused discussion and comments are encouraged.
 - We support exchanging telephone numbers to keep connected and begin building friendships (*As soon as trust is established. Too soon can be detrimental*)
 - Please telephone the facilitator ahead of time and leave a message if you must miss or be late. The facilitators are available for individual consultation between sessions. If you are late, please join in quietly.
 - Have fun and be yourself!
4. Go around group and have each participant state their name and one boundary they would like to work on.
 5. **Handout.** Engage **students** in the “Getting to know you” engagement exercise. This is a handout with a “bingo” format. **Students** are to mingle with others and find people who can answer one of the questions on the bingo sheet. When they find that person they are to write their name in that box. Continue the game until at least 3 people have a bingo!

Find Someone Who...

<p>... was born in Alberta</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... likes sweet potatoes</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... came here by bus/train</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... has a pet cat</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... has met someone famous</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>
<p>... enjoys the same TV Show as you</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... is wearing the same colored socks as you</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... was born in another province</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... drives a car</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... goes to the gym</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>
<p>... likes chocolate</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... can speak another language</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Free Space</p>	<p>... has travelled outside of Canada</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>	<p>... who likes to cook/bake</p> <p>_____</p> <p>—</p>

<i>... has child/ grandchild</i> _____	<i>... rides a bicycle</i> _____	<i>... lives in the same quadrant of the city as you</i> _____	<i>... enjoys the same type of movies/ books as you</i> _____	<i>... has the same color eyes as you</i> _____
<i>... is wearing something orange or brown</i> _____	<i>... likes the same pizza as you</i> _____	<i>... can name five flavors of ice cream</i> _____	<i>... does NOT wear glasses or contact lenses</i> _____	<i>... enjoys the same hobby as you</i> _____

Let's Get Started!

- We are all here to learn more about boundaries. We are going to look at what boundaries are, how good we are at setting and keeping boundaries, and how to improve on using boundaries to keep us safe and healthy!**

Everyone **has** the potential to understand the role boundaries play in our lives, and can develop/improve upon skills to set and maintain boundaries.

- Group Discussion: Ask Students:**
To begin, can you tell me what you think boundaries are?
Write responses on whiteboard

- PP # 2. Read following definition:**

Boundaries Defined

“Boundaries are a life enhancing system of “yes” and “no.” They are stop signs and borders you install to protect yourself so that it is clear that you own your life, make good choices,

and pursue the authentic expression of who you are in the way you live, love, give and relate.”

Guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates to identify for themselves what are reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave around them

AND

how they will respond when someone steps outside of those limits.

9. **Group discussion: Ask all students: Why is learning about boundaries important to you? What do you think will change in your life if you have good boundaries?**

10. **PP # 3.**

Let's review some of the positive results of having boundaries:

What have Boundaries Done for Me Lately?

Boundaries help you to:

- **Define Your Identity** – you become clear and confident with yourself, and others know what to expect from you.
- **Protect Yourself from Violators** – boundaries let in what is good and keep out what is bad, so you remain safe and able to express your true self.
- **Bring Order** – without them, you are unable to regulate demands, ideas, dreams, responsibilities, opportunities, pleasures and activities. Life can become chaotic.
- **Protect Yourself from the Control of Others** – having clear boundaries makes it difficult for others to control you, and makes it easier for you to say no when you need to.
- **Preserve Your Purpose and Mission** – once these are identified, boundaries save you for the relationships and opportunities that best fit who you are.
- **Protect Your Finest Personal Assets** – which includes knowledge, body, skills, abilities, purpose and mission
- **Satisfy Your Need for Self-Confirmation** – by defining you and your personality.
- **Improve Integrity** – better alignment of your values, words and actions

11. Video: BOUNDARIES (Part 1): A Definition of what boundaries are 7:44 **Video link:** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw0FRj5lw00>)

12. **Inform students that we are now going to explore the effects of having no boundaries. Ask learners what the negative results of having no boundaries are. Write on white board.**

13. **PP # 4. Review the bullets below and add any not previously mentioned to the white board.**

Ineffective or Poor Boundaries Can Lead to:

- Loss of respect for self and others
- Loss of control of the direction of your life
- Increased chaos, distractions, and guilt.
- Loss of interest in life.
- Unmet goals and the stress of chaos can lead to hopelessness, depression or

anxiety.

Without personal boundaries, “You will act, sleep, work, groan, feel used and fulfill basic responsibilities rather than make choices to live and love fully, to work hard and nobly, to fulfill your purpose and to contribute passionately to your world.”

(Source: Black, J. & Enns, G. (1997) *Better Boundaries: Owning and Treasuring Your Life*. Oakland, CA. Raincoast Books)

14. **Handout.** How do we know if we have strong or weak boundaries? Divide students into 2 or 3 small groups- each group should have a volunteer or staff present. Small groups are to discuss the following statements and reflect on the points that they personally relate to by using the included questions.

Signs of Ignored Boundaries

You can tell boundaries are being ignored if you are experiencing one or more of the following challenges:

- **Over Enmeshment:** This requires everyone to follow the rule that everyone is to think, feel and act in the same way. No one is allowed to be different from the norm. Uniqueness, independence of thought and/or unusual behaviors are not supported.
Do each of us feel unique? Who of us has felt pressure to “be like everyone else”?
- **Disassociation:** This is blanking out during a stressful emotional event. You feel your physical and/or emotional space being violated and you tell yourself something like: "It doesn't matter." "Ignore it and it will go away soon enough." This “blinking out” results in being out of touch with your feelings about what happened. It also may result in your inability to remember what happened.
Who of us has done this to avoid an argument? How does this leave one feeling afterwards?
- **Burn out and putting yourself last:** You begin to resent that people continue to rely on you, but feel unable to stop it and feel guilty if you try to set a healthy boundary. You may find yourself in a state of emotional distress or reacting strongly when asks you for something.
Is being defensive affective in setting a boundary? What does being a martyr say about that person?
- **Chip on the Shoulder:** This is reflected in your interactions with others. Because of your anger over people in the past not respecting your emotional and/or physical space, or ignoring your rights, you have a "chip on your shoulder" that declares "I dare you to come too close!"
Who among us is reluctant or afraid of new relationships? Is anger a healthy boundary?
- **Control:** This involves you over-controlling your life and other people so that it feels like your world is more predictable. Your goal is not to allow chaos into your life. But too much control can turn others away and make your life too restrictive.
Who of us has gets frustrated with change that is outside of our control?
- **Shy or Distant:** This builds walls or barriers to ensure that others do not permeate or invade your emotional or physical space. This is a defense, due to previous hurt and pain, from being hurt, ignored or rejected. This keeps us inward and unwilling or fearful of opening up your space to others. This stance is your declaration that "I've drawn the line over which I dare you to cross." It is a way to keep others out and put them off.

Who of us has withdrawn to protect ourselves? Why does isolating not work?

- **Smothering:** This results when another is overly concerned about your needs and interests. This excessive interest is **taking over** your emotional and physical space. It can be so overwhelming that you feel like you are being strangled, held too tightly and lack freedom to breathe on your own. You feel **controlled**, used and overwhelmed.

Who of us have had people in their life who “over”-care? Why is it unhealthy to let others take care of us when we can do things for ourselves?

- **Lack of Privacy:** This is present when it seems to you that nothing you think, feel, or do is your own business. You are expected to report to others in your family or group all details and content of your feelings, reactions, opinions, relationships and dealings with the outside world. You begin to feel that nothing you experience can be kept in the privacy of your own domain. You begin to believe you do not have a private domain or your own space into which you can escape.

Who of us have problems deciding what is “private” when with family/friends?

(Source: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14718-building-healthy-boundaries/>)

15. Bring group back together for debrief. Reflection Question: Was everyone able to relate to one or more of these challenges? They show you areas in your life you want to become stronger by setting boundaries.

16. Before we can create stronger, healthier boundaries, we first have to look at our existing boundary beliefs.

Handout. Have students complete “Your Boundary Beliefs” exercise.

Your Boundary Beliefs

Before you can begin to set new and improved boundaries, you need to look at what your existing beliefs about boundaries are.

A= Definitely True B = Mostly True C = Somewhat True D= Not Very True E = Hardly True, If At All

1. I have the power to make choices for myself.
A B C D E
2. I am **valuable but not perfect**
A B C D E
3. I am in a lifelong process of growth
A B C D E
4. My individual **value** is not lowered or raised by other’s opinions of me
A B C D E
5. My life is **more meaningful and rewarding** when living in relationships with supportive and respectful people.
A B C D E
6. My life is **not as hopeful** when living in relationships with uncooperative and disrespectful people.
A B C D E
7. **My own values are not better or worse than other’s.**
A B C D E
8. Certain **things shared in the group will be more valued than others, but this does not add to or take away from the importance of what I share.**
A B C D E
9. Others’ talents are a pleasure to observe & **celebrate.**
A B C D E

10. I value life and live with a sense of gratefulness.
A B C D E
11. I am able to face challenges and meet problems.
A B C D E
12. I accept and like myself.
A B C D E
13. I believe I contribute to the good of others and the world. A B
C D E
14. It is my right and privilege to own my feelings.
A B C D E
15. Boundaries are necessary and appropriate.
A B C D E
16. Boundaries do not harm relationships.
A B C D E
17. Setting limits is necessary to keep relationships healthy.
A B C D E
18. I do not have to give a reason, or apologize for having or setting a boundary.
A B C D E

You Boundary Beliefs (Continued)

Your boundaries are built on your level of friendliness you have for yourself. Using the *Beliefscape* below, you can create a visual representation of how much you treasure yourself and what areas need work.

Fill in the column above each question number to the letter you circled for that question.

Let us first look at Leon, a loving man in his forties who was ending a long term relationship when he filled out his *Beliefscape*. While Leon believed “boundaries are necessary and appropriate,” he quickly saw that he had difficulty applying them in key areas of his life because he felt selfish setting limits:

Example:

A = Definite ly True																		
B = Mostly True																		
C = Somewh at True																		
D = Not very true																		
E = Hardly True																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

Now let us fill out our own *Beliefscape*:

A = Definite ly True																		
B = Mostly True																		
C = Somewh at True																		
D = Not very true																		

E = Hardly True																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

The goal is to believe so strongly in your own value that your *Beliefscape* is colored in fully. This can be done. Picturing your beliefs helps you see (1) the *strength* or *depth* of your positive self view, (2) the overall *stability* of your beliefs, and (3) the *need* for your beliefs to be adjusted.

(Adapted from: Black, J. & Enns, G. (1997) *Better Boundaries: Owning and Treasuring Your Life*. Oakland, CA. Raincoast Books)

17. After group has finished the exercise, explain the results:

- a) The first page of statements: any of the statements with a C or D circled are areas you may want to think about so you can create boundaries around those thoughts, opinions or people that are holding you back.
- b) The graph is just a visual picture: the shaded areas show strength and the white areas are areas of potential! The goal is to try to shade in more boxes – boundaries can help that to happen!

18. Debrief question to group: Would anyone like to share anything they learned from this exercise?

19. Handout : Boundary Solutions

Have students write down 3 boundaries they would like to set in their lives. What is stopping them from setting the boundary, and any ideas they have about how to set those boundaries. This handout will be revisited in Session 3.

Boundary Solutions

Boundary Fear of Setting Boundary How to Set my Boundary

Boundary	Fear of Setting Boundary	How to Set my Boundary

20. Close group. Thank students for attending. Invite group back next week.

SESSION 2

Boundary Types: Physical, Sexual and Spiritual Boundaries

Outline of Exercises and Activities to do during this Session:

- Name Tags: have students put on name tags
- Take Attendance
- Group exercises:
 - Enforcing Physical Boundaries
 - Personal Space Activity
 - Central Belief System exercise
 - Spiritual Meditation exercise
- Small and Large Group Discussions:
- Group Dismissal: Encourage Participants to return next week to continue their Recovery Journey!

Overview: Session 2

Session 2 will look at physical boundaries and how to establish boundaries to protect your body and space around it. We also look at sexual boundaries so that we are aware of our beliefs around sexuality and gender. Spiritual boundaries look at external and inner spiritual boundaries we have developed over time and how they support or hinder our spiritual growth.

Learning Outcome

Completion of this Session section will enable you to:

- ✓ Understand, define and evaluate different types of boundaries
- ✓ Identify your own physical boundaries and evaluate ways of enforcing them
- ✓ Practice ways of exploring your spiritual boundaries

Preparation:

- Handouts: Enforcing Physical Boundaries
 - Your Body Boundaries
 - Central Belief System Exercise
 - Spiritual Meditation
- PowerPoint Slides: 5-8
- Set up room with enough chairs – set in a circle - to provide for the number of expected clients
- Name Tags and Markers for learners AND staff/Volunteers
- Attendance Sheet
- Pens for learners
- Prepare coffee and snacks

Supporting Notes:

Extra support is needed for the Sexual Boundaries section as some people may have an emotional reaction to past/current experiences.

Boundary Types

1. Over the next few sessions, we will be looking at the following boundary types:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Spiritual
- Relational
- Emotional
- Mental

The first one we will look at is **Physical Boundaries**.

2. Begin by exploring how the learners understand physical boundaries.

Physical Boundaries

Physical boundaries can include your body, your home, your work space, your purse or wallet etc.

What other things would you include in [this](#) list of physical boundaries? **Write on white board.**

3. **Handout.** Divide learners into groups of 3-4. “Enforcing Physical Boundaries.” Have the **students** each choose 2-3 of the physical boundaries from the white board that are the most important to them now and write them in the left column on their handout. They can then add how that boundary is violated in the middle column. Each participant in the group takes a turn and shares one of their boundaries with the group. The group is then to brainstorm ways of establishing boundaries. These ideas are then to be written by that participant in the right column

Enforcing Physical Boundaries

What are ways some of the boundaries listed above could be violated, and what you can do to enforce them?

Physical Boundary	How was/can it be violated?	What can you do to enforce it?
i.e. Purse/Backpack	i.e. Friend goes through it	i.e./Remind friend to ask, do not leave purse/backpack unattended

With your group members, ask the following questions about **3 of your boundary** items in the “*What can you do to enforce it?*” column. You may choose to record some of the answers on a separate sheet:

- What are some potential consequences of enforcing a boundary in this way?
- How might you react if others enforced their boundaries in this way?
- How effective might this way be?

4. Bring back into group. Ask if anyone wants to share anything from this exercise.

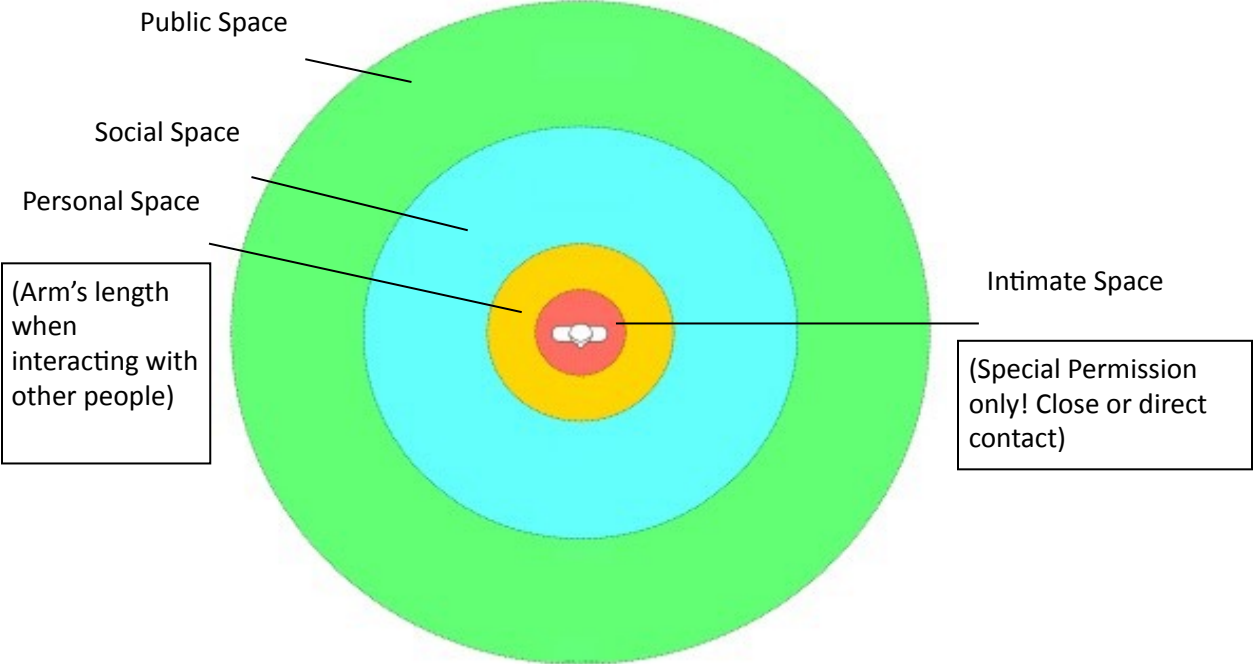
5. PP #5. Review body/personal space boundaries.

Your Body Boundaries

With respect to the body, boundary violations would not only include touching someone who does not want to be touched, but it also includes getting too physically close to someone when interacting with them. This is called „intimate space.“

The diagram below shows an example of the various levels of personal space, including this

person's level of intimate space:



6. Complete the following exercise:

Personal Space Activity

Measuring personal space boundaries.

1. Get into groups of 2 – try to choose someone you do not know well.
2. Each pair stands facing each other, about 5 feet apart
3. Have person A close their eyes and stand still, while person B walks slowly and quietly towards them.
4. Have person A say „Stop“ when person he/she feels that the other person has gotten to close. They can then open their eyes.
5. Switch roles and repeat.

7. Bring the students back into the larger group and ask the following: (Write responses on white board).

Questions:

What did you notice about the differences in personal space?

Did you learn anything about your own or others personal space range?

Some people may have much smaller areas of person space than our own, for example, “a close talker.”

What are some ways we can clearly set our physical space boundary in a respectful way?

8. The topic of Sexual boundaries may be quite uncomfortable for the learners to discuss in group. Make sure to have strong peer support for this exercise in case anyone associates with sexual abuse, etc.

Connected to the concern about personal space are boundaries around our sexuality. Our intimate boundary includes our sexual boundaries.

Sexual Boundaries

What is a Sexual Boundary?

A sexual boundary is another level of respect we ask for ourselves – and offer others. It is the ability to say no – and allow others the same right. It is fine and healthy to have limits around sexuality! ...As sexual beings we have the right to say to **No** to anything.

Your body is the one thing you truly own 100%! Own it! Love it! Respect it! Protect it!

Sexual boundaries are not only about the physical boundaries around your body – they are broader than that.

Ask group: What other issues/concerns are there regarding sexuality that should

have boundaries? Make sure to cover the following points: (write these on white board with a space after each point to write responses from #10.)

- Sexual/gender jokes
- Inappropriate comments
- Inappropriate touching
- Gender discrimination: heteronormative
- Self-disclosure of sexual past/present

9. PP #6. Discuss with group: How can we respond to those who push against the boundaries listed in “8.? Write responses on white board beside the points from #8. Make sure that the following responses are reviewed if not mentioned by the students.

When Your Limits Are Pushed

- **Sexual/gender/jokes**
Calmly let others know that you do not find jokes about sex/gender to be funny as that kind of humor can be insulting to the people they are poking fun at.
- **Inappropriate comments**
Have clear boundaries around comments made to you, about you! Tell others that you do not appreciate hearing negative opinions they have about you and you are not open to hearing them.
- **Inappropriate touching**
NO ONE has the right to touch you WITHOUT YOUR PRIOR CONSENT. In an assertive voice, tell them to “Stop! You do not have my permission to touch me!” Remove yourself from the situation to protect yourself. Ask others for assistance or call 911 if your verbal boundary is not sufficient and you feel in danger.
- **Gender discrimination**
Negative comments about anyone’s gender – male, female, or LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender) are not respectful or funny. Even if you do not agree with another person’s sexual orientation, you should show respect for the person themselves! If you don’t treat others with respect – it is hard to ask others to respect you.
- **Self-Disclosure about sexual past or present**
Sexuality is a private matter. It is a topic reserved for an intimate relationship. If you disclose too many details outside of an intimate relationship – it makes other people uncomfortable, AND it can damage the intimate relationship itself. Keep private things private!

(Adapted from: <http://www.lestout.com/article/people-relations/healthy-sexual-boundaries.html>)

10. **PP #7.** Another Area in our lives that involves boundaries for ourselves and others is our spirituality. We are going to look at the role of spirituality in our lives, the inner boundaries that those beliefs create for us, and the external boundaries we need to have to protect our beliefs.

Spiritual Boundaries

There are a number of spiritual boundaries that are important to keeping yourself well.

Inner Spiritual Boundaries

These are the boundaries we have internalized as a result of our spiritual beliefs. These usually result from the teachings of a particular religion that we were raised with, but also include spiritual beliefs we have developed on our own. They are the quiet boundaries that we try to live by. They are the beliefs that influence our thoughts and actions on our life path. These beliefs generally have two sides – they support us, and they hold us accountable for how we live, which can sometimes be understood as a set of rules we try to live by...and sometimes fail to uphold. Feeling we are not able to always live by such beliefs can cause an inner struggle. We need to adjust our spiritual beliefs to focus on the strength and support we receive from our faith - and less on our shortcomings - so that we are built up in our Recovery journey.

Spiritual Judgement

Most of us have grown up with and have “learned” to believe and act upon our spiritual beliefs. Actions over time develop habits and beliefs in a certain structure. That structure creates the boundaries that protect us, but can sometimes create walls that lead to judgement of others who do not share our beliefs. While it is fine for a person to strictly adhere to their personal beliefs, it is not ok to demand that others follow that same belief system. It is also not respectful to judge another person who does not hold to the same beliefs as you.

External Spiritual Boundaries

External Spiritual Boundaries are those things we deny, ignore, do not do or say because of our beliefs. They usually result from our internal spiritual beliefs.

Ask group: What are some examples of a spiritual/religious boundary that stops us from doing something?

Again, it is fine to practice your beliefs, but it is disrespectful to judge those who do not believe as you do.

11. **Handout.** Our core, central beliefs create who we are and what we do on a daily basis. Our true identity is built by what we decide we are going to believe over a lifetime. Living and acting in ways that are in harmony with our central belief system is critical to maintaining inner-peace and combating the chaos created by influences that oppose what we believe.

Central Belief System Exercise

1. Write down three or four of your main spiritual beliefs.
2. Beside each, write down where you learned those beliefs (from family, a specific person, an inspirational book...).

3. Next, write down how these beliefs support you in your life and Recovery.

Central Belief System

Belief:	Learned from:	Support:

12. PP #8. Review with students:

Now that we are more familiar with our central beliefs, let's look at what happens when we allow people to cross these barriers or letting them slide:

The end result of not maintaining proper spiritual boundaries is the existence of **spiritual chaos** and, sometimes, misdirection in our lives and it can take a great deal of effort to find our place again.

What can we do to protect ourselves from these **spiritual distractions**?

1. Decide how much influence your spirituality will have in your life. Is it one component that you check in with occasionally to review your current thoughts, or will it take a central position and guide your actions on a daily basis? Dedicate time to your spiritual thoughts/practices.
2. When you have heard or experienced something that makes you question your beliefs – do some personal research, meditate, reflect, or seek the advice of someone you respect, including a religious/spiritual leader.
3. Be selective about what you watch on media.
4. Connect with people who believe similarly to you.
5. Practice tolerance of other people's beliefs. Other views and beliefs are NOT a threat to your beliefs unless you take different opinions as an attack on your beliefs.

Practice tolerance and respect!

6. Daily meditation and focus on the path that you want to travel.

These steps may help you create the spiritual freedom you want and the separation from the troublesome part of your spiritual path.

(Source: <http://youngmillionairegroup.com/blog/spiritual-boundaries-setting-boundaries-series-sbs-part-1/>)

13. Handout. Lead group in the following meditation exercise:

One thing that can help in maintaining a spiritual focus is meditation.

Spiritual Meditation

Feel free to adapt this meditation so it better fits your own spiritual and/or religious practice.

Get the room or space ready for meditation. Clear away any workbooks, papers, etc. If you can, dim the lights or even light a candle. Make sure the room is as quiet as possible. Sometimes a fan or other white noise can help to block some unwanted noises.

Find a comfortable position that you can maintain for about 10 – 15 minutes. You can sit, lie down, or whatever works best for you.

Close your eyes and relax...listen to my words...

- Begin by breathing in deeply. Feel your abdomen expand outwards or up towards the ceiling.
- Slowly breath out all of the air in your lungs, drawing your belly button towards your spine
- Again, breathe in deeply, pushing your belly button out as far as you can. Breath out, pulling your belly button in as far as you can.
- Continue concentrating on your breathing, slowly in..... and slowly out.....
- (Pause reading for about 4-5 breaths).
- Continue breathing as you imagine walking along a path in a lovely wooded area. Pay attention to the colour of the trees, the breeze blowing gently, the sound of birds in the trees. Continue your walk, taking in the sensations of the forest around you.
- (Pause reading for about 4-5 breaths).
- As you travel along in the woods, you come across a clearing. In this clearing is a small dwelling. You slowly walk towards this little building in the clearing.
- (Pause reading for about 4-5 breaths).
- As you near the building, you notice someone sitting out front. As you approach, it becomes clear to you who this someone **is**.
- For **each** of us, this is a different person. Someone you are connected to spiritually. It may be someone you know, someone you have never met, or even someone not of this earth.
- As you approach this person, they invite you join them. You are invited to ask any questions you might have, or to have a conversation with them.
- As you continue to breathe slowly, imagine your conversation with this person – **try to find** the answers to the questions you ask. (Pause reading for 3-5 minutes, longer if time allows).
- It is now time to end your talk and walk back through the woods. (Pause reading for 2-3 breaths).
- As you reach the place where you began, slowly come back to the room and open your eyes.
- Know that you can come back to this place whenever you wish to seek guidance, a spiritual moment, or relaxation.

14. Bring focus back to group. Thank students for coming and invite back next week.

SESSION 3

Boundary Types: Relationship, Emotional and Mental Boundaries

Outline of Exercises and Activities to do during this Session:

- Name Tags: have Learners put on name tags
- Take Attendance
- Group exercises:
 - Relational Boundaries exercise
- Small and Large Group Discussions:
- Video BOUNDARIES (Part 2): How to set boundaries for better relationships 9:32
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJHwsPA_L3Q Part 2
- **Boundary Solutions Handout (Evaluation Tool)**
- Group Dismissal: Encourage Participants to return next week to continue their Recovery Journey!

Overview: Session 3

Session 3 will look at identifying and evaluating relationship, emotional and mental boundaries.

Learning Outcome

Completion of this **Session** section will enable you to:

- ✓ Identify, define and evaluate relational, emotional and mental boundaries
- ✓ Identify and practice critical thinking skills

Preparation:

- **Handouts: Relational Boundaries**
 - Controlling emotions
 - Critical Thinking Practice
 - What are some areas in your life you would like to try to push your boundaries?
(from session One)
- Laptop and Projector/Screen
- **PowerPoint Slides: 9-14**
- Set up room with chairs set in a circle
- Name Tags and Markers for learners AND staff/Volunteers
- Attendance Sheet
- Lined Notebooks – one for each student
- Magazines, markers/crayons for OPTIONAL Feelings Journal decorating
- Pens for learners
- Prepare coffee and snacks

Supporting Notes:

1. **Welcome back! Today we are going to look at three more boundaries: Relationship, Emotional and Mental boundaries. We are going to start by looking at Relationship boundaries.**

Handout.

Relationships can be complex! Learning how to set boundaries to protect and enhance our relationships is very important as being connected is necessary for the mental health of most all of us.

Relational Boundaries

Relational boundaries are those that are in place for the various types of relationships that you have in your life. For example, your relationship with a bus driver you see on a regular basis is very different from the relationship you have with a best friend.

On your own, write down the first name of 3 different friends you have a relationship with.

Write down your list in the space provided below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Evaluating Relationship Boundaries:

2. **Divide the group into smaller groups of 2 or 3. Give 5-10 minutes for students to answer the following questions about ONE of the relationships listed above. Then have each person in the small group share their answers with their group.**

Reflect on the questions below with respect to one of the friends you listed.

1. What type of relationship is this?
2. Who initiates contact?
3. Is sharing equal in this relationship?
4. Are there things that you would like to say in this relationship, but you do not or feel that you cannot? What are they?
5. Do you feel that your own boundaries are respected in this relationship? Why or why not?
6. What changes might you like to make in this relationship?

3. **When everyone is finished, return to the large group and reflect on what you learned through doing this exercise.**

4. **PP #9.** Now we are going to explore the area of emotional boundaries. Ask the group:

What are some examples of emotional boundaries? Why do we need them?

Emotional Boundaries

Emotional Boundaries are in place to make it safe to express how we feel – and for managing how other people make us feel. Situations, events and even what people say or do, can make us feel certain ways – happy, sad, angry,...and if we don't have boundaries – for ourselves and for others, emotions can affect how we act and live. One thing for sure – WE are the only ones who can manage our emotions, AND we are the only ones who are responsible for managing how other people treat us. If you are around people who yell at you – making you sad, afraid or angry – it is your responsibility to step up and take care of yourself! You can set and protect your boundaries to control who is influencing your emotions and how.

People who lack healthy emotional boundaries can be very difficult to deal with! Life is short, after all, so try to spend your valuable time with people who nourish your soul rather than depleting your emotional energy. Be true to yourself above all else.

(Source: http://www.ehow.com/print/how_4820610_avoid-lack-healthy-emotional-boundaries.html)

5. Feelings Obstacles

PP #10. Ask the group, “What are some of the reasons we have trouble with emotions?” Make sure that the points below are covered:

- Some emotions are considered strong, others, weak. We may try to repress emotions we see as weak and overuse those we see as strong (gender)
- May think that all emotions are signs of weakness – so try not to show emotions to others
- May not know HOW to express an emotion
- Problems recognizing/naming what one is actually feeling
- “Don't like” how certain emotions make us feel – so we avoid feeling them
- Had bad experiences showing emotion – so withdraw, avoid, become numb

6. PP #11 & 12. Let's take a look at how we can begin to better manage our emotions

Controlling Emotional Behaviors

Some emotions have received labels as good or bad. However, it is important to view all emotions as helpful. To label any as negative might steer people away from learning about feelings, as they may want to avoid something labeled negative.

Emotions that are traditionally 'negative' can warn us when a situation is headed in a direction that may not be the best choice for us, and can motivate us to make changes.

Despite knowing that all emotions are helpful, there are times when it is in your own best interest to control your emotional behavior; releasing them in a different way or at a different time and place. For example, shouting, yelling and swearing at your work **colleague** may lead to you being fired or asked to leave, *even if your reason for feeling angry is justified.*

Here are some ways you can begin to gain better control over your emotional behaviors.

- **Recognize that you are having an emotional response – not necessarily a logical response**

By taking the time to reflect on your feelings and where they are coming from, you can become more aware of your responses to the world around. For example, you may know someone else is correct; however feeling **put-down** or **unheard** could lead you to deny that they might be right. *You respond emotionally and not truthfully.*

- **Understand what the emotional response is: What are you really feeling?**

Once you are better able to identify what your emotional responses are, you can begin to look at different situations and try to understand why you reacted that way. For example, maybe you did not want to admit that **another person was** correct because you think they believe themselves to be better than you. *You respond according to a self-esteem need instead of with the truth.*

- **Accept your emotional responses** *Responding only according to our emotions can be problematic. But denying emotions is not the answer.* We have emotions for a reason, so you should not want to get rid of them completely. Emotions help us decide what we should stay away from and what we should approach. Emotions also help us keep lasting relationships with other people. *They add dimension to our world and help us to express and process inner feelings and define boundaries.*

7. Access strategies that allow you to reduce the intensity of the emotion when needed.

Brainstorm some strategies with the group that you could use

or that have been helpful in the past (Example – when you are angry, take a deep breath and count to 10).

- Breathing
- Time out
- Express your boundary in simple, assertive terms
- Leave
- Self-reflect

(Source: Learn Healthy Emotion Regulation Skills to Reduce Emotional Instability By Kristalyn Salters-Pedneault, PhD.)

8. Emotional Boundary Setting

Once you begin to feel more confident in your ability to identify, experience and express your feelings, you can work towards improving your emotional boundaries.

When we feel upset, embarrassed or uncomfortable with a person's behavior, our emotions alert us. If we learn to trust our emotions and feel confident expressing ourselves we can let the person know how we feel as soon as we are aware of our feeling. This will help us set our boundaries which are necessary to protect our physical and mental health.

(Adapted from: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14723-getting-in-touch-with-feelings/>)

9. We are now going to look at Mental boundaries. Ask the group: What do you think a mental boundary is? Review Mental Boundaries with group:

Mental Boundaries

Mental boundaries define our thoughts and opinions, allowing us to choose what we think about and to stop ourselves from thinking about other things. Additionally, as we form opinions, we have freedom in how we analyze a situation, what information we use to assess the situation, and what our resulting opinion will be.

Regardless of whether or not someone agrees with our opinion, it is ours to have and creates a distinction between us and someone else in our lives. Maintaining your own opinion or value about something is one of the components that make you a unique and distinct person.

For some people, rigid mental boundaries can prevent a person from growing and learning. We live in a world where we are always given opportunities to learn and try new things that allow us to grow and become better people. However, if we are stuck in our ways, our mental boundaries can hold us back.

It is important to keep out the opinions and thoughts of others that do not relate to our core values, while at the same time, allowing some new thoughts in through critical thinking.

10. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking, and being able to think clearly and rationally.

Critical thinking does not mean being argumentative or being critical of others. Critical thinking skills can be used in exposing mistakes in beliefs and bad reasoning, and can also be used to support other viewpoints, to cooperate with others in solving problems and acquiring knowledge. (Source: Lau, J. *A Mini Guide to Critical Thinking*. University of Hong Kong. March 2009)

Critical thinking is a skill that people develop as they grow and learn. This skill becomes more important as we get older and are exposed to more and more opinions and beliefs in the world. Some people have difficulty with critical thinking because **it requires a person to set aside assumptions and beliefs to think without bias or judgment**. This can be very difficult to do.

Critical thinking involves holding back your beliefs so you can explore and question topics from a neutral, "blank slate" point of view. **It also involves the ability to know fact from opinion when exploring a topic.**

11. PPN #13. Divide the group into groups of 3-4. Have them complete the following exercise:

Critical Thinking Practice

These exercises are designed to help you develop and practice critical thinking skills.

Critical Thinking Exercise 1: Tour Guide for an Alien

Pretend that you have been assigned the task of conducting a tour for aliens who are visiting earth and observing human life.

You are riding along in a hot air balloon, and you float over a professional baseball stadium.

One of the aliens looks down and becomes very confused, so you tell him that there is a game going on.

With your group, try to answer the following questions for your alien friend.

1. What is a game?
2. Why are there no female players?
3. Why do people get so passionate watching other people play games?
4. What is a team?
5. Why is it that the people in the seats cannot just go down on the field and join in?
6. Why is there a “winning” and “losing” team?

12. With students still in groups, ask them what the experience was like? What did they learn about assumptions?

If you try to answer these questions fully, it will likely become apparent that we carry around certain assumptions and values. We support a certain team, for instance, because it makes us feel like we are a part of a community. This sense of community is a value that matters to some people more than others. Furthermore, when trying to explain team sports to an alien, you have to explain the value we put on winning and losing.

When you think like an alien tour guide, you are forced to take a deeper look at the things we do and things we value. They do not always sound so logical and true from the outside looking in!

13. PPN 14. Ask students to form new groups of 3-4 for the next exercise. This next exercise will look at how we can tell fact from fiction. Ask group: Why is this important for our mental health?

Critical Thinking Exercise 2: Fact or Fiction

Do you always know fact from opinion? It is not so easy to do sometimes. Recent developments in the media have made it easy for groups with political agendas, and for web sites, to offer false information as true. All this makes it more important than ever for us to develop critical thinking. You must use trustworthy sources to form your opinions and base your decisions on.

If you *do not* learn the difference between fact and fiction, you will get stuck reading and watching things that only reinforce beliefs and assumptions you already own. **Interesting thing, people tend to only hear and attend to information that supports their existing beliefs – even if they are wrong!** That is the opposite of learning and expanding your boundaries!

Try to determine whether each statement sounds like a fact or an opinion, and discuss with the group:

- My mom is the best mom on earth.
- My telephone number is difficult to memorize.

- The deepest part of the ocean is 35,813 feet deep.
- Dogs make better pets than turtles.
- Medication is the only treatment for mental health conditions.
- Smoking is bad for your health.
- Eighty-five percent of all cases of lung cancer in the U.S. are caused by smoking.
- The doctor is always right
- Slinky toys are fun.
- Two out of ten people are boring.

You will probably find some of the statements easy to judge, but other statements difficult. If you can debate the truthfulness of a statement with your group, then it is probably an opinion!

(Adapted from: <http://homeworktips.about.com/od/paperassignments/a/Critical-Thinking-Exercises.htm>)

16. Bring Group back together and allow for feedback about the exercise.

17. How often do you really go for something? I mean really put yourself out there achieve your goals? How far do you go and keep going until you achieve it? [Each one of us will answer differently](#)

Maybe it is [going out to meet a friend after isolating for a long time, moving out on your own, saving money for a trip or finding a part-time job.](#)

Pushing Mental Boundaries, By Dean Coulson

Comfort zones

“There is no growth in the comfort zone and no comfort in the growth zone!”

To get anywhere in this life, you have to want to go beyond your comfort zone. Too many people [are](#) too afraid to do anything about their dreams. A lot of the time people listen too much to what others say about what they CAN'T do, and in doing so, they keep themselves back. Other people may not have the courage to try [something new](#) themselves, and instead, [either find people who are not interested in growing, or sit on the couch, watch tv and admire others who are actively experiencing life, reinforcing the belief that they, themselves, can't.](#)

[Do not let this be you!](#) Move forward and get uncomfortable. When this is achieved, you are going to have to do it again and again, constantly being in an “uncomfortable state.” This is how we grow, and push our boundaries in our lives so that we can enrich them.

18. Video BOUNDARIES (Part 2): How to set boundaries for better relationships 9:32 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJHwsPA_L3Q

19. What holds us back from pushing past our comfort zone?

Fear, Doubt, apprehension – that uncomfortable feeling in the pit of our stomach, the anxiety that makes us feel sick and makes us doubt what we are doing, sometimes, before you even start.

What you have to remember is that fear is just an emotion, it does not hold substance. It can be overridden.

Do it anyway!

Do what you want to do regardless of how you feel and you can achieve great things. You will eventually become desensitized to its affects.

That is until the next new thing you want to do, and then the cycle repeats. However, the more you tackle these feelings, the more used to it you will be and you will be better equipped in the future to deal with them.

Realize your Potential!

Too many people are stopped in their tracks by fear and never realize their dreams. What I am saying here is realize your potential and go for it. **DO NOT** let anything hold you back; believe in yourself, keep pushing your boundaries and you will get to where you want to be.

20. Eliminate Fear

Remember, the key is [mentally](#) handling [the](#) emotion of [FEAR](#). If you are not careful, fear can devour you and completely paralyze you by its effects. Try to not let your fear do this to you.

The sick feeling, the shaking, the dry mouth, the tunnel vision - it is the effect of adrenaline, the need for flight or fight, that has all been built to protect us for thousands of years. However, in

modern, society it can be a completely misplaced ideal.

Remember it is only adrenaline, a reaction to a stimulus, a by product of feeling anxious or stressed. Do not let it control you; understand it and you can master your fear to harness it for your own gains.

Fear is the friend of exceptional people, get used to it and utilize it! [Name it and harness the energy!](#)

(Source: <http://www.allroundathlete.com/2010/04/pushing-mental-boundaries/>)

21. Handout. We are now going to revisit the exercise you did in Session 1 on Boundary Solutions. Let us see if we have learned some things we can do to manage setting boundaries.

Have students review the 3 boundaries they listed in Session 1. Have they set any of the boundaries? If so, they can add or change the 3 boundaries to fit a current boundaries concern.

Boundary Solutions

Boundary	Fear of Setting Boundary	How to Set my Boundary
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NOTE: This is an Evaluation Tool so facilitator must verify the completion of this exercise for each student.

22. Bring attention of the group back. Encourage them to return next week.

SESSION 4

Understanding and Setting Boundaries

[Outline of Exercises and Activities to do during this Session:](#)

- Name Tags
- Take Attendance
- Group exercises:
 - OPTIONAL: Small and Large Boundaries
 - Individual reflection – 3 ways of boundaries
 - Begin to set Personal Boundaries
 - WIN Boundary Exercise
 - Practicing Boundary Settings
 - Individual exercise: Back-ups to Help You Stick To Your Boundaries
- Small and large Group Discussions:
- Video BOUNDARIES (Part 3): How to ENFORCE Boundaries for better relationships 5:59
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz7aAoa8vsQ> Part 3
- **Back Ups to Help You Stick to Your Boundaries (Evaluation Tool)**
- Group Dismissal: Encourage Participants to return next week to continue their Recovery Journey!

Overview: Session 4

Session 4, will look at different types of boundaries, self-awareness of existing boundaries, challenges to boundaries and role-play practice of setting boundaries.

Learning Outcome

Completion of this [Session](#) will enable you to:

- ✓ Identify and evaluate different ways your boundaries have been set
- ✓ Explore and practice ways you can begin to set or strengthen your boundaries
- ✓ Identify ways your boundaries might be challenged
- ✓ Practice tools to [establish and](#) maintain your boundaries

Preparation:

- **Handouts: 3 Ways of Boundaries – Activity**
Begin to Set Personal Boundaries
Back Ups to Help You Stick to Your Boundaries
- Laptop and Projector/Screen
- **PowerPoint Slides: 15-26**
- Set up room with chairs set in a circle
- Name Tags
- Attendance Sheet
- Small pieces of paper for the “Practice Boundary Setting” exercise
- Pens for learners
- Prepare coffee and snacks

1. **OPTIONAL Information and exercise. You may begin with this, or begin at #3 – 3 Ways of Boundaries.**

Using Boundaries In Your Relationship – Watch Out!

Should you put your foot down in your relationship or should you try to be more flexible?

We all make boundaries in relationships and they often work well for us. We know what we can accept and tolerate from our friends. Boundaries are our self-protection and can stop us from getting hurt. However, sometimes boundaries can cause misunderstanding and breakups **if they are too rigid**. What are your personal boundaries and how are they working in your relationship? How about your **friend's** boundaries – can you live up to them? Are your boundaries in harmony with each other?

Relationship boundaries vary dramatically from person to person and can be big or small.

Examples of **big boundaries** – would you accept a friend who:

- Is having an affair
- Uses illicit drugs on a regular basis
- Abuses you,
- Hurts your children or your pets

The big boundaries are what you might not tolerate and cause your relationship to end. Then there are the smaller boundaries

Examples of **smaller boundaries**:

- bedtime
- Tidy house
- travel
- day/night person

The smaller boundaries are those which you have to feel safe and healthy – but they can be a bit more flexible in that you could occasionally stretch a small boundary in order to accommodate a friend. Smaller boundaries are based more on elected care needs and less on core values.

Remember - Not only do you have your set of boundaries, so does your ... friend.

Unfortunately they may not all mesh with yours. Some you may have set mutually, but the rest are based on each of **you having your own, different safety needs**. This conflict of boundaries not meshing usually falls within the smaller, more personal boundaries and **can** lead to relationships **difficulties**. Your **friend** may feel like you are trying to control them and feel that you are acting like a control freak ...People do not like feeling controlled by others.

An important thing to remember is that it is ok to be somewhat flexible with smaller boundaries!

If your **friend** wants to do something that may feel scary to you but falls within your smaller boundaries - now is the time to talk about it. Talk with them before you put your foot down. Try to listen and understand why they want to do it. More importantly assess how you will really feel if it happened. **You might find that challenging yourself to step outside of a smaller boundary results in a new experience which helps you to grow and expand your experience!** Try not to set small or large boundaries based on fear – they should be based on keeping you safe – but not blocking life experience that may help you grow.

Our smaller boundaries may always be there but allow yourself to be flexible at times. Only if you feel it is appropriate, move your boundary line to help mesh with your partners. Try not to control your partner – find the balance that will keep you both happy.

(Adapted from: <http://nowloveme.com/using-boundaries-in-your-relationship-watch-out/>)

2. **OPTIONAL: Divide the group into smaller groups of 3-4 people. Have each person in the group complete the following exercise:**

My Small and Large Boundaries

Write down 5 large boundaries you have. These are the boundaries that affect how you think and act in the world, such as boundaries against racism, yelling, etc.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

In the group, discuss how each of these boundaries keep you feeling safe.

Now write down 5 small boundaries that you have. These are boundaries that out in place to create order and comfort in your life – such as keeping a tidy house, going to bed at a specific time, etc.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Discuss with the group whether or not you can be flexible with these and how it would make you feel if you had to stretch the boundary to accommodate someone else – how do you stay comfortable and safe when you stretch a boundary?

3. **PP #15 & 16.** Now let's look at different types of boundaries and how to set them. To begin, let's look at 3 different types of boundaries:

3 Ways of Boundaries

All boundaries, including the types we have listed, can be set in one of 3 ways – Permeable, Semi-permeable and Rigid.

Permeable Boundaries (Weak)

An example of a physical permeable boundary is a line drawn in the sand. You can see there is a boundary there, but there is really nothing to stop you from crossing it. Sometimes, a wave comes in and easily washes the boundary away.

In terms of emotional and less physical boundaries, we can think of things that overtake us and keep us from thinking and responding. We allow everyone to come into our lives without **making sure** if they are safe; we trust too easily.

For most of us, having overly permeable boundaries will allow unwanted emotional and mental assault from others we need protection from. Also, permeable boundaries may mean we let too much of ourselves out, limiting our level of privacy and sense of self.

Rigid Boundaries (Too strong)

An example of a rigid boundary is a brick wall – it cannot be moved without a great deal of force. A person with rigid boundaries is closed off so nobody can cross their boundaries. Often, people with overly rigid boundaries do not allow others to get close to them emotionally or physically. Rigid boundaries do not allow us to be open to new thoughts or ideas and can often keep us in the dark. **Ultimately, rigid boundaries can lead to chronic feelings of loneliness.**

Semi-permeable/Flexible Boundaries (Strong yet open)

Flexible boundaries are firm and clear. They are open enough to allow new ideas, thoughts, and **information** to enter when needed, but also closed **enough** to protect us from harm. Think of a sieve, it allows small, safer items through while keeping larger, unwanted items out.

4. **Handout.** Individual Reflection: Have each student complete this exercise independently:

3 Ways of Boundaries – Activity

For three of the boundary types we have explored in the previous sections or others important to you, identify whether your enforcement of those boundaries is Permeable, Rigid or Semi- Permeable. Then examine how healthy and appropriate how you set your boundaries is for you. Once you have completed your lists, share 2 of them with your group to see if more ideas are offered by the group.

Boundary Types:

Physical, Sexual, Spiritual, Relational, Emotional, Mental. Other:_____.

1. Physical_____

- Permeable (Weak)
- Rigid (Too strong)
- Semi-Permeable (Strong yet open)

How healthy/appropriate has this been for you? [What one step you can take to strengthen these boundaries?](#)

2. Sexual_____

- Permeable (Weak)
- Rigid (Too strong)
- Semi-Permeable (Strong yet open)

How healthy/appropriate has this been for you? [What one step you can take to strengthen these boundaries?](#)

3. Spiritual_____

- Permeable (Weak)
- Rigid (Too strong)
- Semi-Permeable (Strong yet open)

How healthy/appropriate has this been for you? [What one step you can take to strengthen these boundaries?](#)

1. Relational_____

- Permeable (Weak)
- Rigid (Too strong)
- Semi-Permeable (Strong yet open)

How healthy/appropriate has this been for you? [What one step you can take to strengthen these boundaries?](#)

2. Emotional_____

- Permeable (Weak)
- Rigid (Too strong)
- Semi-Permeable (Strong yet open)

How healthy/appropriate has this been for you? [What one step you can take to strengthen these boundaries?](#)

3. Mental

- Permeable (Weak)
- Rigid (Too strong)
- Semi-Permeable (Strong yet open)

How healthy/appropriate has this been for you? [What one step you can take to strengthen these boundaries?](#)

5. **PPN #17-21. Have everyone take a turn reading a Boundary Law. After each statement, open the floor for comments/reflections:**

Ten Laws of Boundaries:

Law #1: The Law of Cause and Effect

If you smoke, you are likely to develop a smokers cough or even cancer. If you overspend, you will likely get calls from creditors, or worse, may not have money for rent or food. If you exercise regularly, you may have fewer colds and more energy. Establishing boundaries helps an individual learn the law of cause and effect and how to protect themselves in the future.

Sometimes, someone else may step in and pay that credit card bill or deliver groceries. Though this may be done with the best intentions, crossing this boundary may take one's ability to learn and grow. We must all learn to reap what we have sown on our own.

Law #2: The Law of Responsibility

Setting boundaries and being responsible for one's own life is very important. It is not selfish to want to set boundaries and be the best you. However, it is important to continue to love others while also taking care of ourselves.

We cannot feel another's feelings for them, grow for them, or learn for them – but we can support and care for others, and allow them to do the same for us.

Law #3: The Law of Power

You have the power to admit when you need to make a change, without necessarily having the ability to change it yet.

You have the power to ask for help. You can call a family member, friend, peer support, doctor, counselor or anyone else that you trust to help you when you need it.

You have the power to make the choices that are most positive for you and your life. You

have the power to set and enforce new and improved boundaries

Law #4: The Law of Respect

When setting and enforcing boundaries, we fear others will not respect our boundaries; "They will get angry if I set limits," "They won't accept me if I say no." We may even judge other's boundaries, thinking we know what is best.

If we love and respect others who tell us no, they will then love and respect our no. Our concern should not be what others would do or what we want them to do; they are free to make their own choices.

Law #5: The Law of Motivation

If what you are doing is taking more than you are getting back, your relationship may be doomed to failure. Make sure your motivation is honorable and respectful to others – as well as to you. Some people are motivated to do things for less healthy reasons:

- Fear of Loss of love or abandonment
- Fear of Other's anger
- Fear of Loneliness
- Guilt
- Payback/retribution

Law #6: The Law of Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the effects of setting boundaries and be responsible to the other person, but that does not mean you should avoid setting a boundary that might hurt or anger someone else. To have boundaries is to have a purposeful life. Sometimes our actions may hurt another, as long as we are not harming them. [For example, it may hurt a friend to tell them to talk a bit less and listen a bit more, but in the long run, aiming for more balanced communication in a relationship teaches both parties how to improve communication with each other and with others.](#)

We need to evaluate the pain our new boundaries cause other people. We need to see that this hurt may possibly be helpful, and sometimes, a great thing we can do for the relationship.

Law #7: The Law of Proactivity

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. When working towards boundary changes, some people [make demands and forceful attempts to reclaim power that was lost in the past when they felt they had no boundaries.](#) **Proactive** behavior involves preparing for a future situation, rather than just reacting to it.

These reactive phases [do not establish healthy boundaries.](#) [It is better to focus on boundaries as ways to strengthen connections with others as equals.](#)

Law #8: The Law of Envy

Envy defines 'good' as 'what I do not have,' and hates the other that has it. We all have envious parts to our personalities, but it becomes destructive when it keeps us dissatisfied, [asking, "Why not me?!"](#) It is difficult to decide what we want and need when we are focused on others.

People without boundaries feel empty and unfulfilled. The time and energy they spend looking at other people could be used to take responsibility and do something about it.

Law #9: The Law of Activity

An important part of boundary setting is being active and doing the work. It may be hard at times, but without resistance, we cannot gain strength. Think of the example of a bird hatching from an egg. If we break the egg for the bird, it will die. The bird needs to peck its own way of the egg, into the world.

Law #10: The Law of Exposure

A personal boundary like is a property line: It defines where you begin and end. Your boundaries define your relation to others. In order for others to honor your boundaries, [your boundaries](#) need to be made visible and communicated with others. The path to real love is to communicate your boundaries openly.

(Adapted from: Cloud, D. & Townsend, J. *Boundaries*. 1992. Zondervan.)

6. Video BOUNDARIES (Part 3): How to ENFORCE Boundaries for better relationships 5:59 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz7aAoa8vsQ>



7. **Handout.** Have each student complete this reflective exercise on their own.

Begin to Set Personal Boundaries

Creating and maintaining personal boundaries is one way we can improve our lives. This section will show you how to stand up for yourself, set personal boundaries, and free yourself from the “disease to please.”

Self Awareness

The first step to set boundaries is self-awareness. Pay attention to the situations when you are low on energy, feel butterflies in your stomach, or want to cry. Identifying where you need more space, self-respect, energy or personal power is the first step.

Another way to identify your boundaries is by completing these following sentences with up to 6 examples. Feel free to use another page if you need more space.

1. People may not _____.
Examples: ...Humiliate me in front of others; Criticize me; go through my personal things.

1)	4)
2)	5)
3)	6)

2. I have the right to ask for _____.
Examples: ...Privacy; More information about medication before taking it; Support.

1)	4)
2)	5)
3)	6)

3. To protect my time and energy, it is ok to _____.
Examples: ...Change my mind; Turn the ringer off on my phone; Say No.

1)	4)
2)	5)
3)	6)

8. PP #22. WIN Formula.

Setting Your Boundaries

Start setting simple but firm boundaries with a graceful or neutral tone. This will feel uncomfortable at first, but as you take care of yourself, the personal power you gain will make it easier.

1. Be sure to have support in place before and after each conversation. If you cannot find support from a friend or family member, you may be able to find a friend online or call a local distress centre, or dial 811 for 24hr contact with a psychiatric nurse.
2. Calm your emotions and body with some breathing exercises and a few minutes alone to gather your thoughts *before* having your boundary conversation.
3. Use the WIN formula to state your boundary:

WIN FORMULA

Goal: to set boundaries through clear communication

Process:

Describe, in brief, a recent boundary conflict that pertains to friendship.

- **W** stands for “*when you...*”describing the action that is causing the boundary conflict.
- **I** stands for “*I feel ...*”describing the emotion that is attached to the action.
- **N** stands for “*Need...*”describing what the person needs their friend to do in order for the boundary to be set.

Example:

- **W** = *When you* get angry with me and stop talking to me (factual information—has no judging involved—based on what has happened.)
- **I** = *I feel* hurt and disrespected. (Taking responsibility of feeling into self rather than blaming the other person. Letting your friend know how their behaviour makes you feel, but NOT that they are a bad friend)
- **N** = *I need* you to tell me when you are angry and what you are upset about so that we can work through our problems together because I really value your friendship (Validating the friendship and giving the friend an opportunity to try and work on the conflict).
- *Or else I will...* not be able to trust our friendship and will have to stop spending time with you as I will always be afraid of saying or doing something to make you angry and you will ignore me again. (This is the consequence/threat of what you will do should the other person decide not to accept your boundaries)

This will not help in *all* boundary situations. Sometimes if the boundary will not be accepted, and if it is not a boundary you feel you can be flexible with, the friendship may not be healthy and have to end. Make sure that you consider being more flexible with your boundaries if they do not harm you.

9. PPN #23. Exercise: Divide group into small groups of 2-3 people. Have each person in the small group take turns using the WIN formula to set the following boundaries. The other

participants will offer feedback.

WIN Boundary Exercise

- To set a boundary with an angry person *who is yelling at you:*
- To set a boundary with personal phone *calls after your bedtime:*
- To say no to extra commitments:
- To set a boundary with someone who is critical *of your choices:*
- To set a boundary with a roommate about keeping your shared living space clean/tidy
- To set a boundary with a person who always wants to borrow money:
- To set a boundary... _____ (add a boundary you want to set with someone)

10. When setting boundaries, there is no need to defend, debate, or over-explain your feelings. Be firm, gracious and direct. When faced with resistance, repeat your statement or request.

Back up your boundary with action. Stay strong. If you give in, you invite people to ignore your needs

11. Gather students back into group and allow time for feedback about the exercise.

12. **PPN # 24 & 25.** Once we set boundaries – they can be challenged! Have students take turns reading the following headings and associated bullets. Pause for reflection and comments after each.

Boundary Challenges

Here are some things that may add difficulty to your choices to set and strengthen your boundaries. If you are aware that some of the challenges may occur, you can be better prepared to reinforce your boundaries during challenging times.

Life Shifts

- Things are always moving, changing and needing adjustments. New lines need to be drawn, old ones removed.

Disagreements

- Not all people in your life will agree with where you have drawn your boundaries. It is necessary for healthy relationships to discuss and learn to respect each other boundaries.

Misunderstandings can occur when:

- Others have weak boundaries and therefore cannot respect yours.
-

You have not adequately paved the way for a new boundary through respectful notification and discussion.

- Others only support your growth if they do not have to make adjustments.

Excuses

- “I just live day to day and trust things will work out.”
- “It is easier to say “yes” than “no”.”
- “If I set boundaries, I might as well kiss that relationship/friend/opportunity goodbye.”

Your Own Patterns/Beliefs

- Your patterns have been adopted to protect you in times of discomfort and continue when that time has passed. Building boundaries is a process. Free yourself from blocks to personal power.

Fear

- Change can be scary. Fear can alert you to potential threats and danger. Feel the fear, listen to its message. **Name it.** Act on it if necessary, or go around it.

Ignorance

- Knowledge is power, so fight ignorance by educating yourself and improving your level of understanding **and critical thinking.**

Facing the Challenge

- By facing and beating a challenge, you are better prepared for future challenges and have reaped the reward of achievement.

(Adapted from: Black, J. & Enns, G. (1997) *Better Boundaries: Owning and Treasuring Your Life*. Oakland, CA. Raincoast Books)

13. Now we are going to practice how to set boundaries using role plays. Put up PPN #22 WIN Formula.

Hand out small pieces of paper – 2 or 3 per person. Ask each student to write down a boundary challenge they are having – keep it anonymous. Put all papers into a basket. Divide students into groups of 3-4. Each student will take turns picking a piece of paper from the basket and then is to practice a boundary setting response to that challenge with the group. The other group members will encourage and give feedback and suggestions. They are welcome to use the WIN Formula. You could also print the following scenarios on paper and make your own basket of questions to be used.

Practicing Boundary Setting

Have each statement below on separate pieces of paper. Each student will take turns, draws a statement and then practices a boundary setting response.

Practicing Boundary Setting

For each situation below, practice what you would say to assertively set a new boundary or to enforce an existing one. You may choose to cut the scenarios out and have each person choose one at random.

Remember, treating others with respect will earn you more respect in return.

- You have a friend who shows up at your apartment without being invited. **They** always

assume that you have time and want to spend an evening with **them** watching TV. Tonight, you do not want **them** around.

- Your friend goes right for your refrigerator whenever **they** come to your place. **They** take anything **they** want and start eating it. You are on a tight budget and cannot afford to always feed your friends. You really wish **they** would ask before helping himself to your food.
- Your support worker really wants you to go to a group that is being held in the community. You are unsure about what the group is about and want more information before deciding, but you feel you are being pressured into attending the group.
- Your friend regularly calls you late at night when you are already in bed. You want them to stop calling so late.
- Your landlord frequently shows up at your apartment without notice with a task **they** feels needs to be done immediately. You know that **they** need to give 24 hours notice, and you know that your rights deserve to be respected.
- One of your friends keeps using the word "schizo" to talk about odd behaviors of **their** cat. You are offended by this word and want **them** to stop using it.
- You are at the doctor's office. He/she informs you that they would like you to try a new medication for your mental health issue. You do not think you need a different medication.
- You are out to lunch with a friend. At the end, your friend says "Oh, sorry, but I'm broke. You can pay for my lunch, right?" You do not want to pay for their lunch and are angry that he/she assumed you would.
- You are on the bus and the stranger next to you is asking you some very personal questions you do not want to answer.
- You are feeling very depressed and overwhelmed lately, and your friend is also. Your friend keeps talking about how much worse his/her depression is than yours and does not give you a chance to share your concerns. You feel hurt by this.

14. Bring group back together to reflect on the exercise.

15. PPN #26. Review with group and then allow time for completion of individual exercise.

NOTE: This is an Evaluation Tool so facilitator must verify the completion of this exercise for each student.

Back Ups to Help You Stick to Your Boundaries

1. Promises to Yourself
 - "When I reach a certain point of exhaustion/stress, I will stop, identify the problem and/or get the rest and help I need."
 - "When I am rejected, I will feel the discomfort, sort though my part, if any, accept current circumstances, learn and move on."

2. On-Call Help

- Confidante: Someone who will let you vent and keep it confidential.
- Mentor: Someone you admire and trust to encourage, teach and guide you.
- Helping Team: friends and family who will be there for you and help you when you need.

3. Personal Power Sources

Physical: Sleep, exercise, nutrition, etc.

Spiritual: meditation, affirmations, prayer, etc.

Emotional: getting feelings out in a way that is safe for you and others.

Mental: thinking about something else for a while, giving your mind a break.

Relational: being respectful and tolerant



Handout.

Back Ups to Help You Stick to Your Boundaries

For each of the ways to help you maintain your boundaries, fill in what you are already doing or what you can start doing to help you stick with your own boundaries. You may choose to post this on your fridge or mirror, or keep a copy in your wallet.

1. Promises to Yourself

I will _____

I will _____

I will _____

2. On-Call Help

Confidante: _____

Mentor: _____

Helper/Helping Team: _____

3. Personal Power Sources

Physical: _____

Spiritual: _____

Emotional: _____

Mental: _____

Relational: _____

4. Community Resources

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

17. Gather attention back to group. Go around group and have each student share one boundary they are going to set moving forward.

18. Thank all for coming and encourage them to explore other courses offered by the Recovery College!

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