# Relationships

## Boundaries

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PURPOSE OF GROUP: to learn about & practice boundary setting

MATERIALS NEEDED: print p. 4-5 of guide (cut out each scenario); optional

**1.** Facilitator can open group with an **icebreaker**.

> *Designate one group member as the "**guesser**". Ask them to leave the room for a few seconds. Put the rest of the group members in a circle and ask a volunteer to be the "**leader**". Bring the "guesser" back into the room and ask them to stand in the middle of the circle
>
> *The group members will start by waving their hands in the air. After a few seconds, the "leader" will take another action (i.e. stomp, jump, dance, etc.) that the rest of the group members must immediately follow. **The "guesser" must figure out who the "leader" is**
>
> *The "leader" can keep changing what they're doing until the "guesser" guesses correctly!
>
> *You can do as many rounds of this icebreaker as you want

**2.** After the icebreaker, you can introduce today's topic, **boundaries**. You can ask group members, "Why are boundaries important?"

For facilitator to discuss afterwards:

-Boundaries are important because they are limits, and **we need to set limits in our relationships with others**

> -Without limits, we may develop resentment towards people or experience burnout at work or school

-Boundaries **teach us how to say "no".**

> -We struggle with this because we want to please others. However, this often leads to people taking advantage of us!
>
> *You can ask group members, "Do you struggle with saying 'no'?"

**3.**

-There are different types of boundaries. When you set **physical boundaries**, you are protecting your body, your personal space, and your privacy.

> -<u>Example</u>: Megan found out that her sister was sneaking into her bedroom to read her diary. Megan talked to her sister and said she may not go in her room unless she was in there, too
>
> -<u>Example</u>: Chrystal's ex-boyfriend tried to kiss her. She stepped back and told him she would prefer a hug because they are no longer dating
>
> -<u>Example</u>: Ron's new co-worker was getting too close to him when they were talking. He stepped back to establish some personal space

-When you set **emotional & intellectual boundaries**, you are protecting your thoughts & feelings.

> -<u>Example</u>: John values his girlfriend's opinions and cares about her feelings, but he does not let them dictate his own thoughts or his own mood

-When you set **time boundaries**, you are protecting how you use your time.

> -<u>Example</u>: It's 6pm and Stacey is leaving work. Her boss asks her to stay an extra hour, but she tells him that she is leaving to catch her son's baseball game
>
> -<u>Example</u>: Tim's brother wants him to come outside to play basketball, but Tim has to finish his homework. He tells his brother, "I'll come outside in 1 hour"

**4.** Group members will now **explore their own boundaries and the limits they have struggled to set in the past.**

> *You can give each group member an opportunity to share an example of a time they failed to set a boundary (or a time in which their boundary was crossed). You can then ask them, "What could you have done differently?"

*You can even have group members participate in **role-plays** to demonstrate how they could have set boundaries (in the example they give)

**5.** If you have time, you can also give volunteers the slips you cut out from p. 4-5 of this guide. Each slip contains a scenario that volunteers can act out (a **role-play**) to show how they would handle the situation.
　　　*Encourage group members to give each other feedback after each role-play

**6.**
-Facilitator can conclude group by telling group members that **the key is to find balance.** We want to establish boundaries with people, but we don't want to be too rigid.

-Also note that we set different boundaries with different people.
　　　-For example, the boundaries you set with your partner are different than the boundaries you would set with a co-worker or a neighbor!

-Be prepared to face backlash- it may be a challenge to set boundaries (often because other people don't want them!)
　　　-Don't let this deter you- we must set limits to prioritize self-care
　　　　　a. It's not selfish to set boundaries!
　　　*You can ask group members, "Who might challenge the boundaries you set in the future?" and, "How might you respond to them?"

**\*The following are for adults:**

You just met your new neighbor a few days ago. She likes to gossip, and she keeps asking you very personal questions. You are not comfortable sharing so many personal details about yourself just yet.

You just started a new job. Your co-worker keeps asking you to do some of their duties for them. You want your co-worker to like you, but you are feeling a little overwhelmed.

You find out that your partner has been looking through your emails.

**\*The following are for teens:**

Your boyfriend/girlfriend keeps asking you to hang out with them after school, but you also want to set some time aside to see your friends.

Every time you go to a party, your friends ask you to drink. You want them to like you, but you know you're not supposed to drink. You're also usually the one who drives them home.

Your classmate often makes fun of you (the outfit you're wearing, the ideas/opinions you have, etc.) They say they're just "messing" with you, but you feel uncomfortable. You want to stand up for yourself, but you're afraid you might anger them.