



# Building Stronger Connections: Boundaries & Control

## Health I - Lesson 6

This project was supported by Grant No. 15IOVW-22-GG-01061-CY awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

### NOTES SECTION GUIDE:

- *Italic Text – Notes for instructors*
- Normal Text – Verbal Instruction (as you get familiar with the content, you are welcome to use your own voice, but feel free to use the verbal instruction notes we have included here as a guide)
- Yellow highlight - instructional considerations

### Review Community Agreements

**Review:** Revisit the agreements students generated during Lesson 1. Teacher will review the agreements that students created and ask for a thumbs up from everyone to show their continued commitment to upholding these agreements during today's lesson. Ask for any new agreements that need to be added. Vote on those if any.

### Teacher Script:

When we talk about unhealthy relationships we often talk about the importance of **boundaries**. However, we don't usually discuss how we establish clear boundaries and why some people insist on crossing people's boundaries. This can be challenging to discuss so let's review our agreements to make sure that we are ready.



**In your journals :**

**How does it feel when someone doesn't respect your boundaries?**

**OR**

**How does it feel to witness someone having their boundaries crossed?**



## **Journal**

**Direction:** Display the journal prompt on the board. Give students 4 minutes for independent writing in their journals.

- *How does it feel when someone doesn't respect your boundaries? OR How does it feel to witness someone having their boundaries crossed?*

# Types of Boundaries

## Material

Giving or lending things

## Physical

Personal space, privacy, body, sexual

## Mental

Thoughts, values, and opinions

## Emotional

Knowing what's yours and what's someone else's

## Digital

Deciding what you share on social media and with whom

## Discussion: Inside/Outside

**Direction:** Arrange students in the room in two circles, one on the inside and one on the outside. This format is to help them visualize the importance of boundaries, how they can protect us even if they are not always the most convenient.

Guide students through the discussion questions. After each discussion question, ask learners in each circle to swap places with learners in the other circle. This is intended to remind them of how boundaries can be manipulated and controlled by others. And sometimes that can be okay and other times it can be very very frustrating.

## Teacher Script:

Personal boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. They are essential for maintaining healthy connections with others, and there's no universal "right" or "wrong" way to set them. Rather than judging each other's boundaries, we should recognize that they're personal choices that help us feel safe and comfortable.

When we communicate our boundaries, we're effectively communicating our needs. This allows others to care for us in ways that feel right, while also helping us understand how to care for them in return.

## Material Boundaries

- Determine how we share our belongings
- Include decisions about lending items like money, clothes, books, or food

- physical proximity

#### Mental Boundaries

- Encompass our thoughts, values, and opinions
- Include our ability to maintain our beliefs while remaining open to others' perspectives

#### Emotional Boundaries

- Act like an invisible force field between our feelings and others'
- Help us separate responsibility for our emotions from others' emotions
- Strong emotional boundaries help prevent taking on guilt for others' negative feelings

#### Digital Boundaries

- Cover what we share online and with whom
- Include privacy settings, photo sharing, and social media presence

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Looking at these different types, what kinds of boundaries might be important in a school setting?
2. How might boundaries differ in a romantic relationship?
3. What makes some boundaries easier or harder to maintain than others?
4. Why are digital boundaries, particularly around photo sharing, just as important as physical boundaries?
5. What signals might indicate that we need to set or adjust a boundary?
6. How might boundaries change within our different relationships?
7. What makes it challenging to maintain boundaries when others push back?
8. Reflecting on your journal responses:
  - a. Which boundaries were you already thinking about?
  - b. Which types of boundaries on this list were new to you?



## Boundaries are NOT

- Rules about someone else's personal expression or choices
- Restrictions on who others can befriend or spend time with
- Attempts to control another person's actions

*Setting boundaries is not about making someone else into who you want them to be - it's about making it safe to be who you are!*



### Teacher Script:

When setting boundaries with friends and loved ones, remember that boundaries arise from our own needs for safety, security, and comfort—not from a desire to control others.

Boundaries Are NOT:

- Rules about someone else's personal expression or choices
- Restrictions on who others can befriend or spend time with
- Attempts to control another person's actions

Boundaries exist to create a safe space for you to be authentically yourself, not to mold others into different people. They're about protecting your own wellbeing while respecting others' autonomy.

# Boundaries vs. Control

## Boundaries

- "I don't enjoy being around heavy drinking, so I'll stay home on party nights."
- "Since the group parties every weekend now, I'll look for additional friends who share my preferences for other activities."

## Controlling Behavior

- "If you want me to come out, you can't drink."
- "No one can drink around me, or I'll leave."
- "If you keep drinking around me, our friendship is over."

### Teacher Script:

The critical difference between boundaries and control: Boundaries focus on our own behavior and choices, while attempts to control focus on others' behavior. Let's look at the example.

Healthy Boundaries:

- "I don't enjoy being around heavy drinking, so I'll stay home on party nights."
- "Since the group parties every weekend now, I'll look for additional friends who share my preferences for other activities."

*(CLICK TO REVEAL)*

Controlling Behaviors:

- "If you want me to come out, you can't drink."
- "No one can drink around me, or I'll leave."
- "If you keep drinking around me, our friendship is over."

It's ok to dislike something! It's okay to feel uncomfortable in certain situations! These feelings help us identify where we need to set boundaries. The key distinction lies in how we respond to these feelings.

When your discomfort turns into demands about the behavior of others, we move out

of boundaries, and into attempts to control. This distinction is very important! Your discomfort is valid, but it should guide YOUR choices, not dictate OTHERS' behavior.

Healthy boundaries allow you to:

1. Acknowledge your feelings
2. Make choices that protect your wellbeing
3. Respect others' autonomy
4. Seek environments and relationships that align with your values

## Boundary

I'm only comfortable with kissing and holding hands right now. I'll let you know if that changes.



### *Respect the boundary*

I hear that you're only comfortable with holding hands right now. I respect that and won't pressure you for more.

### *Decide the boundary doesn't work for you*

I understand that's your boundary. For me, I'm looking for a relationship with more physical intimacy. Maybe we're not compatible right now.

## Teacher Script:

Sometimes it can be challenging to distinguish between respecting someone's boundary and feeling controlled by it. The key difference is that you always have the power to choose how you respond.

Let's look at a romantic relationship example.

The boundary: "I'm only comfortable with kissing and holding hands right now. I'll let you know if that changes."

When someone communicates their boundaries to us, we have a choice.

*(CLICK TO REVEAL)*

We can choose to respect that boundary:

- What might be a statement that shows respect for the boundary?

*(CLICK TO REVEAL)*

"I hear that you're only comfortable with holding hands right now. I respect that and won't pressure you for more."



(CLICK TO REVEAL)

We can decide that this boundary doesn't work for us:

- If a boundary doesn't work for you, what is an example of an unhealthy response?  
*(Look for: Ignoring it, pressuring them to change it, making them feel guilty, ghosting, etc.)*
- What about a healthy response?

(CLICK TO REVEAL)

Here is a healthy response: "I understand that's your boundary. For me, I'm looking for a relationship with more physical intimacy. Maybe we're not compatible right now."

You're not being controlled when someone sets a boundary - you're being given a choice:

1. Respect their boundary and continue the relationship
2. Decide the boundary doesn't work for you and adjust or end the relationship

## Manipulation

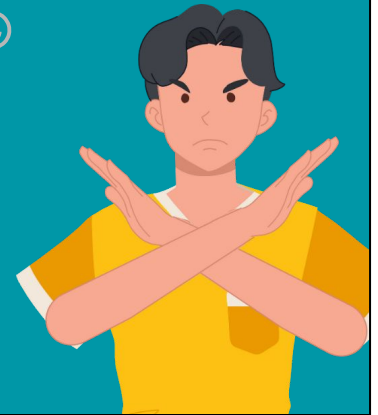
"If you really loved me you would..."

## Making Threats

"I'll tell everyone you're a bad person if..."

## Creating rules beyond the boundary

"You can't even look at other people"



### Teacher Script:

Warning signs that someone is trying to control you:

*(CLICK TO REVEAL)*

Use manipulation ("If you really loved me you would...")

Make threats ("I'll tell everyone you're a bad person if...")

Create rules beyond their personal boundaries ("You can't even look at other people")

Remember: Setting boundaries is about creating safety to be who you are, not about making others become who you want them to be!

## ACTIVITY

# Boundaries & Bracelets

Use patterns, colors, textures, material, size and shapes to create bracelets that represent each of these five personal boundaries.

1. Material - Giving and lending things
2. Physical - Personal space, privacy, body, sexual
3. Mental - Thoughts, values, and opinions
4. Emotional - Knowing what's yours and what's someone else's
5. Digital - Deciding what you share on social media and with whom

## Activity

**Direction:** Use the slide deck to display the Boundaries and Bracelets template and instruct students to recreate the template in their journals. Alternatively, students can use the **H1.6 Boundaries and Bracelets Handout**. Students will design bracelets to remind themselves of their personal boundaries, especially in times of stress or pressure. Actual bracelet making materials can make this activity more engaging although are not necessary.

## Teacher Script:

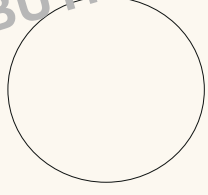
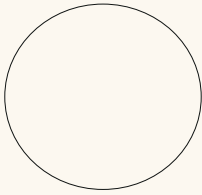
During this activity you are going to design bracelets that can remind you of your personal boundaries, especially in times of stress or pressure.

Use patterns, colors, textures, material, size and shapes to create bracelets that represent each of these five personal boundaries.

1. Material - Giving and lending things
2. Physical - Personal space, privacy, body, sexual
3. Mental - Thoughts, values, and opinions
4. Emotional - Knowing what's yours and what's someone else's
5. Digital - Deciding what you share on social media and with whom

Include explanations of your design choices in your journal.

Recreate this template in your journals



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**Direction:** If not using the handout, provide this slide for students to copy in their journals. Students are also free to create their own shapes for their bracelets.



## In your journals :

Create a 6, 7, or 8- word phrase you can repeat to yourself to remind yourself to express thanks and appreciation for things, people, or events in your life.

Write the phrase on 5 lines.



### Journal

**Direction:** Ask students to flip to the last page of their journal where they made a gratitude circle in the previous lesson.

### Teacher Script:

Turn to the back of your journal where you created your gratitude circle in the last class. Today, we are going to do a gratitude and mindfulness exercise.

Create a six, seven or eight word phrase you can repeat to yourself to remind yourself to express thanks and appreciation for things, people, or events in your life.

Write the phrase on five lines in your journal. Stack the words so each line looks exactly like the one above. This helps you focus carefully on the words and how they are arranged.

*(Thank the class for their energy and efforts today and collect their notebooks before students depart.)*

# BOUNDARIES & BRACELETS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Design a bracelet to remind yourself of your personal boundaries, especially in times of stress or pressure. Use patterns, colors, textures, material, size and shapes to create bracelets that represent each of these five personal boundaries. Include explanations of your design choices in your journal.

- Material - Giving and lending things
- Physical - Personal space, privacy, body, sexual
- Mental - Thoughts, values, and opinions
- Emotional - Knowing what's yours and what's someone else's
- Digital - Deciding what you share on social media and with whom

