

# Keeping Healthy Boundaries Handout

## Protect Your Time

- In today's world, time is important and valuable.
- It may seem like there is never enough time to focus on what is really important in our lives.
- But our time is something we don't usually think of protecting.
- *Do you have friends who drop by unexpectedly and expect your undivided attention?*
- *Do you have people in your life who demand your time in unreasonable ways?*

## Protect Your Emotions

- Your emotions are where your love and caring come from.
- These deep emotions should be well protected.
- Often, people may say or do things that hurt us and can damage our emotions, even if they don't mean to.
- *Has someone in your life made remarks or comments that hurt you?*
- *Have people acted thoughtlessly or selfishly toward you?*

## Protect Your Energy

- You need your energy to function.
- Energy can come from social time or "alone time", your inner peace, or from activities that refresh you, like getting enough sleep, exercise, healthy food, etc.
- Sometimes people do or say things that rob you of this energy, like invading your privacy, creating turmoil or chaos, making unreasonable demands, keeping you from prayer or relaxation, etc.
- *Did something like that ever happen to you?*
- *Describe what happened and what you did about it.*

## Protect Your Personal Values

- Your beliefs and deep values may include cultural and spiritual beliefs.
- Personal needs and family customs may be very important to you.
- People in your life should respect your beliefs and values, even if they don't agree with them.
- Your boundaries also protect your sense of identity.
- Your identity is, **and should be kept separate from** the identity of other people in a relationship.

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## Protect Other Areas that are Important to You

- Think of your boundaries as invisible lines or fences to protect you or the things that belong to you.
- You have the right to say what is unacceptable to you and what is not. – And you need to do that.
- If the relationship is unbalanced and you are doing so much that you are not able to meet your own needs, there is a boundary issue.
- If there is violence, something illegal, or something unethical is being done to you by the person you are in a relationship with, it can violate your boundaries.

**Think of a boundary in your life that needs to be stronger**, and make a plan for what you can do about it. Some common solutions are talking to the other person or getting away from the situation.

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Example: A co-worker tells you jokes that are racially or sexually offensive. You dislike those comments and you dread being around him.

- The boundary being crossed is that it goes against your values and beliefs.
- Action you could take: Let him know how the jokes and comments make you feel. – Tell him you don't want to hear that kind of jokes anymore.

Example: You need to do a weekly report every Friday morning, but people come to your office and interrupt you a lot. - You usually can't get it done in time.

- The boundary being crossed is that your time is very important, and it needs to be protected.
- Action you could take: Ask your manager for 2 hours of time on Friday mornings without being interrupted. You could put a sign on the door, "Do Not Disturb" and have your manager take care of things during that time. Or, ask if you can do the report at home before coming in to work that day.

Davis, B. (2009). Drawing effective personal boundaries. Retrieved from <http://www.liveandworkonpurpose.com/files/Boundaries.pdf>

- Learn to set and keep healthy personal boundaries.
- Try to understand and honor the boundaries of others.
- Healthy boundaries improve self-esteem and provide more security and stability in our lives and our relationships.