

# Setting Boundaries Workbook



# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The goals of interpersonal effectiveness involve having your needs met, influencing others to fulfill your requests, and ensuring your opinions are respected. This aims to enhance existing relationships, form new and satisfying ones, and end unhealthy or toxic connections. It's essential to maintain balance in relationships and harmonize change with acceptance. Interpersonal skills need to be learned, as they are not innate. Emotions and automatic negative thoughts (ANTs) can often hinder the development of healthy relationships and the ability to end toxic ones.

In DBT, Interpersonal Effectiveness refers to communication and social skills which help us to:

- Express our needs and desires clearly and assertively.
- Build and maintain healthy relationships with others.
- Set and respect personal boundaries.
- Resolve conflicts in a constructive manner.
- Listen actively and empathetically to others.
- Gain respect and validation from others.
- Negotiate and compromise effectively.
- Manage and reduce interpersonal stress.
- Enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.
- Handle criticism and rejection gracefully.

These tools include:

GIVE  
FAST  
THINK  
DEARMAN  
BOUNDARY SETTING

# GIVE SKILL

The GIVE skill is useful in every interpersonal relationship. Whether it's your first time meeting this person or if you have been in a relationship with them for a long time GIVE will help to build and maintain positive relationships.

A large, stylized letter 'G' in a light blue color with a black outline, positioned to the left of the 'GENTLE' section.

## GENTLE

Be more gentle and treat the other person with respect. Don't threaten, attack, or express judgment during your interactions with other people.

A large, stylized letter 'I' in a light yellow color with a black outline, positioned to the left of the 'INTERESTED' section.

## INTERESTED

Listen and look interested in the other person. Show interest in other people's points of view by listening without interrupting.

A large, stylized letter 'V' in a light orange color with a black outline, positioned to the left of the 'VALIDATE' section.

## VALIDATE

Show other people that you understand by validating their thoughts and feelings. Try to recognize when you are demanding, and respect their opinions.

A large, stylized letter 'E' in a light blue color with a black outline, positioned to the left of the 'EASY-GOING MANNER' section.

## EASY-GOING MANNER

Be relaxed and light-hearted, smile, and show an easy-going manner using a little humor. You will be more approachable. Leave your attitude at the door.

# FAST SKILL

FAST is about maintaining self-respect during conflict and requires you to be truthful about the problems (even if you are tactful about how you frame them) and not to sacrifice your values or integrity. You'll want to use these skills in sequential order and all together.

F

## FAIR

Be fair to yourself and others. Validate your feelings and wishes, as well as those of others. Being fair means not using dramatic or judgmental thoughts.

A

## APOLOGIES

Stop making unnecessary apologies; you do not need to apologize for having an opinion or disagreeing. However, this doesn't mean you never apologize.

S

## STICK TO YOUR VALUES

Be clear on what you believe is the moral or valued way of thinking and acting. Don't change your values just to be liked. Instead, stand up for what you believe in.

T

## TRUTH

Avoid dishonesty. Be truthful by avoiding exaggerations, excuses, and lies. Are you exaggerating the situation? Are you minimizing it? Are your words true?

# THINK TECHNIQUE

THINK is a DBT interpersonal effectiveness skill developed to reduce negative emotions toward others. You won't need to use this skill in every interaction, but it will be helpful when interpersonal problems arise and you're feeling upset.

T

## THINK

Think about the situation from the other person's perspective. Is she angry, too? Is she viewing you as unreasonable, just like you're viewing her as unreasonable?

H

## HAVE EMPATHY

What does it feel like to be the other person? Let yourself feel her emotions for a moment.

I

## INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretations of the other person's behavior. Think about possible reasons why she did the thing that upset you. Start with outlandish reasons (to open your mind) and move toward more realistic reasons.

N

## NOTICE

Notice the other person. Notice their emotions and behavior. Notice that she smiled at you, even though you may not be on good terms yet. You don't have to do anything about it just yet; simply take note.

K

## KINDNESS

This doesn't mean you have to forgive and forget immediately. This means that your words are kind. You may say, "What you said to me hurt, and I hope we can fix this in the future. Right now, I need some space."

# BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are personal limits and guidelines that individuals establish to protect their well-being and define how others can interact with them. These limits help individuals maintain their physical, emotional, and mental health by clearly outlining acceptable behaviors, ensuring mutual respect, and preventing exploitation or manipulation. Boundaries can pertain to personal space, emotional needs, time, and other aspects of life, serving as a foundation for healthy relationships and effective communication.

Maintaining healthy boundaries is a crucial personal skill that enables you to flourish and clearly express your needs. Setting limits is important to prevent others from exploiting or manipulating you. For instance, someone with strong personal boundaries will confidently say 'no' to requests that make them uncomfortable without feeling compelled to apologize.

## TYPES OF BOUNDARIES

**Physical Boundaries:** Limits concerning personal space and physical touch, ensuring one's body is respected and protected.

**Sexual Boundaries:** Guidelines related to sexual activity, determining what is comfortable, acceptable, and consensual.

**Material Boundaries:** Rules about the ownership, lending, and borrowing of personal possessions and financial resources.

**Time Boundaries:** Limits on how one allocates their time, balancing personal, professional, and social commitments.

**Verbal Boundaries:** Standards for respectful communication, defining acceptable language and tone in interactions.

**Emotional Boundaries:** Protections for one's feelings and emotional well-being, ensuring others' emotions do not overwhelm or manipulate one's own.

# PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

## PERSONAL BOUNDARIES ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE....

- Self-Respect: Establishing boundaries is an act of self-respect, demonstrating that you value yourself and your needs.
- Healthy Relationships: Proper boundaries foster close and caring relationships, preventing dependency, manipulation, and passive-aggressive behaviors.
- Stress Reduction: Clearly defined and enforced boundaries help minimize stress by preventing overcommitment and conserving your energy.
- Self-Care: Boundaries are crucial for self-care, enabling you to prioritize your well-being without guilt.

## HOW PEOPLE VIOLATE BOUNDARIES....

- Physical Intrusion: Invading personal space or engaging in unwelcome physical contact.
- Emotional Manipulation: Inducing guilt, dismissing feelings, or oversharing personal issues without permission.
- Time Overcommitment: Expecting someone to be available without prior agreement or disregarding prearranged schedules.
- Intellectual Overreach: Disrespecting another person's viewpoints or imposing your own beliefs on them.
- Material Exploitation: Using or borrowing someone's belongings or money without proper consent or consideration.

# 3 TYPES OF BOUNDARIES

## RIGID BOUNDARIES

A person who always keeps others at a distance (whether emotionally, physically, or otherwise) has rigid boundaries. They won't allow anything to flow in or out, like having a blocked filter.

## HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

These kinds of people value their own opinions the most. They resist compromising their values for others' happiness and tend to learn how to share personal information in the most appropriate manner (no over or under sharing). And most importantly, they know how to accept when others say "no" to them.

## POROUS BOUNDARIES

These are the kinds of people who tend to get too involved with others. People of this boundary type have a penetrable boundary. They allow themselves to be manipulated and can suffer the consequences of others. If you've ever let someone make you feel guilty, you may have a porous personal boundary.



# DEARMAN TECHNIQUE

DEAR MAN teaches a strategy for effective communication. Using this skill, clients learn to express their needs and wants in a way that is respectful to themselves and others, increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes.

D

## DESCRIBE

Describe the situation simply. stick to the facts by avoiding opinion and interpretation.

E

## EXPRESS

Express how you are feeling by using an "I" statement. Don't assume that the other person knows how you feel.

A

## ASSERT

Say what you need. don't beat around the bush. be firm and clear.

R

## REINFORCE

Reward people who respond well, and explain the positive effects of getting what you want or need.

M

## MINDFUL

Maintain your position and keep your mind on your goals. Don't steer off from the objective of the interaction.

A

## APPEAR

Use a confident voice, body language and make good eye contact. This will help you appear confident.

N

## NEGOTIATE

Remember that you aren't demanding anything. You are asking for something. Be open to negotiation.

# DEARMAN ACTIVITY

Now use the DEARMAN activity to express your needs/wants.

DESCRIBE

D

EXPRESS

E

ASSERT

A

REINFORCE

R

MINDFUL

M

APPEAR

A

NEGOTIATE

N

# WHAT BOUNDARIES SOUND LIKE

Think of some old habits that haven't served you which should now be replaced by healthy boundaries (for example: experiencing burnout from helping others too much. Being taken advantage of, letting others' waste my time....)

I don't like to be.  
called that name.

I need some time  
alone right now.

I'm not comfortable  
discussing that topic.

I can't commit to  
that right now.

Please don't raise  
your voice at me.

I need you to respect  
my personal space.

I don't appreciate  
being treated that  
way.

I'm not comfortable  
lending money at  
the moment.

I need to prioritize  
my own well-being  
right now.

# WHAT BOUNDARIES SOUND LIKE

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"I don't like that, can we try something different?"

"I would like to come, but I have already committed myself to something else at that time."

"I can only stay for a little bit."

"I really can't talk about that right now. It isn't the right time".

"I am sorry you are having such a tough time. However, right now I am not in a place to take in all of this information."

"I'm happy to lend you my dress, but i'll need it back in 2 days"

"I can't lend you my car, as it is only insured for me"

"We're unable to provide financial assistance, but perhaps there's another way I can be of help to you?"

I'm unable to make it this weekend as I have already made other plans.

I'm unable to talk at the moment because I'm busy with something. Can I call you back in an hour?

# HOW I CAN IMPROVE MY BOUNDARIES

## LIMITS

What is acceptable to you and what isn't?

## VALUES

Your limits are often determined by your values. What are your top values?

## ASSERTIVE

How can you communicate your needs?

## RESPECT FOR SELF

Are you putting other people's needs before your own? How can you show yourself more self-respect?

## RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Are your boundaries only self serving and hurting your relationships with other's? Is there a way you can reconsider your boundaries without sacrificing your needs?

## SELF AWARENESS

Do you listen to your feelings? Has there been a time that you felt uncomfortable but didn't listen to your feelings?

# EVALUATING MY BOUNDARIES

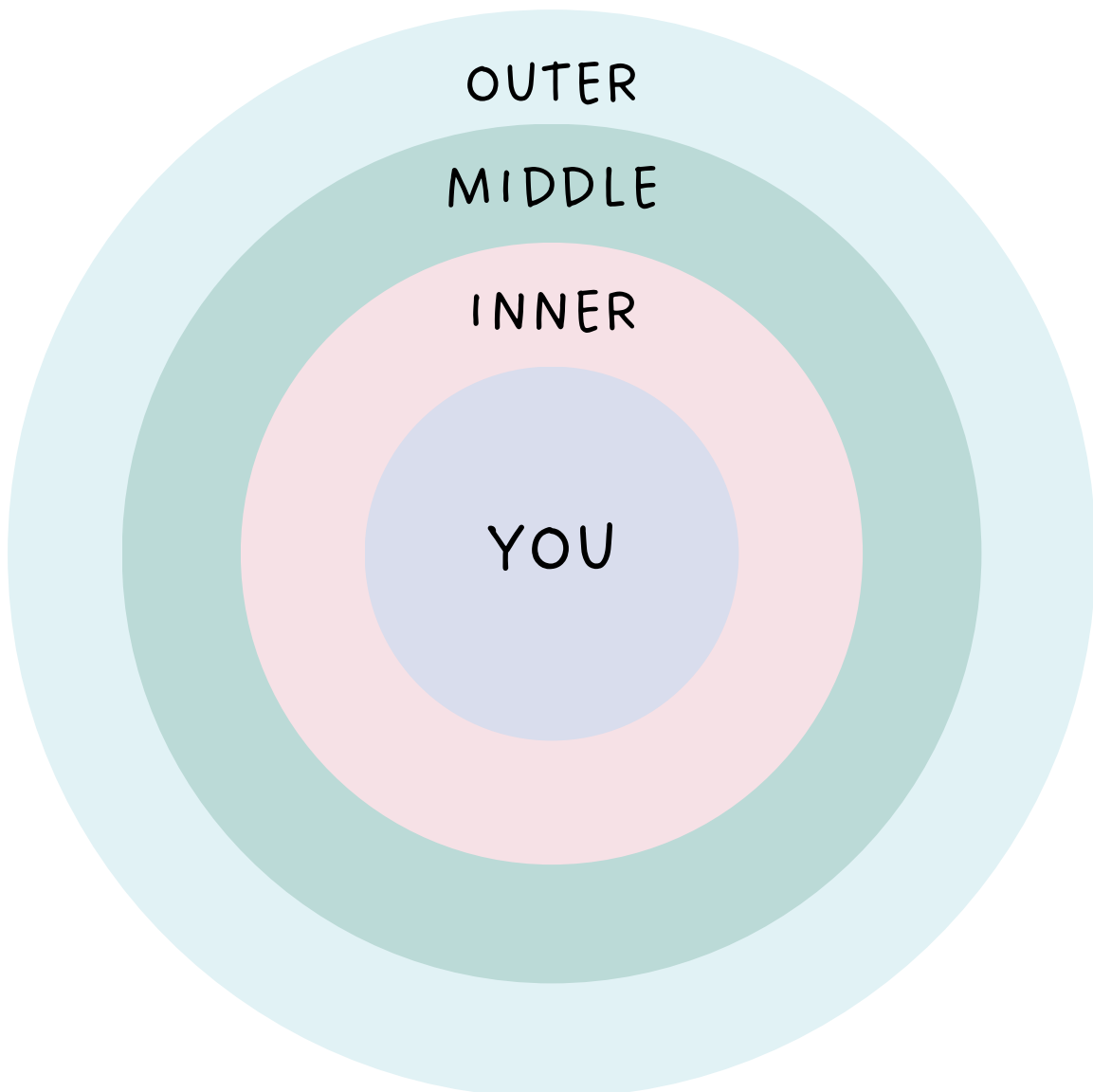
BOUNDARY THAT  
WAS CROSSED

ACTIONS I CAN TAKE

# BOUNDARY CIRCLES

Boundary circles help define your relationships. Your inner circle includes those you trust deeply and share personal details with. The middle circle consists of people you enjoy and feel comfortable with but wouldn't share intimate details. The outer circle is for acquaintances you like but don't know well and spend limited time with.

What factors contribute to someone moving from one circle to another?  
What are the qualities and attributes of the individuals in your inner circle?  
What might cause you to move someone to the outer circle?  
How much time and energy do you invest in individuals within each circle?



# BOUNDARY CIRCLES

The boundary circle is a tool to help you determine who you feel safe and comfortable with in your inner circle, fostering meaningful connections. This exercise will guide you in exploring and defining your boundaries, as well as identifying the qualities you value in others. Please write down the names of people who fit into each circle.

## INNER CIRCLE

## MIDDLE CIRCLE

## OUTER CIRCLE