Respecting Boundaries

Goal:
- To identify elements of a healthy relationship and understand how they play out in young people’s friendships and dating relationships.
- To build skills in identifying and respecting personal boundaries.

Short Description:
This workshop engages participants in understanding the importance of respecting the personal boundaries of others. Participants will practice interacting in respectful ways in complicated situations.

Learning Objectives:
After participating in this workshop, young people will:
1. Be able to recognize respectful relationships and behaviors that indicate respect for boundaries.
2. Will have gained skills in setting their own boundaries and noticing and respecting other people’s boundaries.
3. Have identified resources if they or someone they know is in an abusive situation.

Audience: Ages: 11-14

Instructor Qualifications:
Comfort with young people, ability to facilitate interactive workshops. Background in sexual violence prevention would be helpful.

Time: 1.5 hrs

Materials:
- Handout, “What makes a good friend”
- Cut outs, “Scenarios”
- BARCC Pens
- Markers and newsprint
- BARCC brochures/palm cards

Evaluation:

Workshop Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Suggested Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner to Partner</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who, What, Where on Sexual Assault</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes a good friend?</td>
<td>20 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources and Reinforcement</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part 1: Welcome and Introductions**  
**5 minutes**

**Purpose:** To provide a safe, comfortable environment for youth to discuss relationships.

**Activity 1:** Facilitator(s) begin the workshop by introducing themselves if needed; explaining the purpose of the workshop; its length; and the kinds of activities that the participants will be asked to do.

Suggestion: “We are here to have a discussion about healthy relationships and to help you practice setting boundaries and respecting others’ boundaries. We will also give you some information about what happens when our boundaries are crossed and where you can go for help.”

Ask if they know what a boundary is. Give examples of personal boundaries: touching others; eating their food; sitting too close.

Suggestion: If there is time, include a name game before introducing the partner-to-partner activity, especially if people do not know each other.

An easy name game is ‘Name and a Feeling’:

1. Ask participants to form a circle;
2. The first person says their name, a feeling, and a movement to represent that feeling;
3. The next person group repeats the first person’s name, feeling, and movement and adds their own name, feeling, and movement.
4. Continue around the circle until everyone has added their own name, feeling, and movement.

**Activity 2:** Discuss ground rules for the workshop. Explain that these are rules that everyone accepts that will help ensure that everyone feels comfortable participating in the workshop. The group can add to the ground rules at any time during the workshop. Some rules to consider:

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Listen to others without interrupting.
- Do not share personal information that you hear in the workshop.
Part 2: Partner-to-Partner

10 minutes

Purpose: To introduce the concepts of recognizing our own and other people’s boundaries, comfort zones, and individual differences in a fun, interactive way.

Preparing to lead this activity:
Make sure that the participants are in a space where they can move freely.

Activity:
1. Ask everyone to find a partner and to indicate once they have done so, either by raising their hands or linking their arms together.
2. Explain that you will be calling out different positions for them to form with their partner, such as “elbow to elbow” which means that the partners should touch their elbows together. Ask everyone to show you “elbow to elbow.”
3. Tell them that there is one other action that they should be aware of and that is “partner to partner.” When you call this out they must find a new partner as quickly as they can. They cannot partner with the same person more than once.
4. Begin calling out positions at a somewhat rapid speed. Examples of positions are “elbow to elbow,” “finger to finger,” “knee to toe,” “palm to palm,” etc. After calling out three to five positions call out “partner to partner.” You may need to remind them that means they should switch partners, and quickly!
5. Once they’ve found new partners begin calling out positions again. Wait until they’ve switched partners several times before calling out “face to face, neck to neck, or nose to nose.” It is best to end on “nose to nose,” because they usually have VERY strong reactions to that position and likely need a break at this point. Be prepared for shouting, laughing, and comments indicating that they were not comfortable or happy about “nose to nose.” Do not force them to do any of the positions that they are uncomfortable with.
6. Discussion:
   • Were there any positions that made you uncomfortable? Typical responses include: nose to nose, neck to neck, backside to backside, and anything that brings their faces or mouths close together.
   • What about it was uncomfortable? Typical responses include: I don’t know the person; the person was of the opposite sex; the person was of the same sex; it was just “too close;” it was like kissing.
   • Did you know when your partner was uncomfortable? How? Typical responses include: looking away, moving away, nervous laughter, body language, making eye contact, not making eye contact, saying “no” or other verbal cues.
   • Did anyone try to find a friend during the partner switch? Why? Who would you have been more comfortable doing this game with? The person I am dating, my best friend, my cousins, etc.
   • What else has an impact on our comfort when it comes to personal space? Typical responses include: gender, age, relationship with person, cultural background, behavior, etc.
   • Would people have been comfortable playing this game with their boss, supervisor, or coworkers? Responses might include: it’s inappropriate to touch co-workers or for someone in a position of authority to touch their employee in some of those ways because if the employee is uncomfortable they might not feel that they can do anything about it without losing their job.
7. Conclude activity by helping them to say what they learned:
   - Every person has a comfort zone and that they can become aware of how they know when they are uncomfortable.
   - Their comfort changes if the context (person, environment) changes.
   - They are aware of many ways to tell if someone else is uncomfortable.
Part 3: What makes a good friend?
25 minutes

Activity 1: Worksheet on What Makes a Good Friend?
1. Introduction: This activity will help students think more about important qualities in a good friend, and in someone to whom they would be attracted as a boyfriend or girlfriend.

2. Distribute the worksheet: WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND? (see teachers guide: what makes a good friend worksheet)

Read the directions to the group, and ask students to complete it. Walk around and help them understand the instructions. Students may want to talk to each other about how they are answering- it is important to reinforce the fact that this is their personal opinion and that everyone can have a different answer.

3. Discussion:
   - Looking first at your ‘grades’ for a close friend, which traits did you give a good grade to? Why?
   - Make sure to ask students to elaborate on their choices.
     o “Why is that characteristic important to you in a relationship?”
     o Ask if they can give an example of what they mean.
     o Many times one person gives an “A” to something and another students has given it an “F”. Encourage a respectful debate and make sure that every student feels heard.
     o Repeat back what they are saying in their own words.
     o Point out inconsistencies. For example, often one student will say that they like it when their boyfriend or girlfriend gets jealous because that means they care about them and love them. If you ask what other people put for that trait, another student will probably say they don’t like that because that means there is no trust in the relationship. Most students will agree that trust is important.

   - What other important qualities did anyone add to the list?

   - What items did you give an F to? Why?

   - Now look at your ratings for important traits of a boyfriend/girlfriend. How many of your “grades” were the same as the ones you gave for a close friend? Which ones were different? Why?

   - What might concern a person who is just beginning to think about going out with a person? What advice would you give him/her?

   - What happens if two people who want to be “more than just friends” have different ideas about what is important to them?
• If someone says they gave an A to “someone I can share my true feelings with,” use the word honesty and ask if it’s always good to be honest. Why do people sometimes find it hard to be honest in their relationships? Is it ever OK to not be honest? What are some advantages to being honest? Some disadvantages?
• How are relationships sometimes unequal? What conditions/circumstances allow one person to have more power than another? This question comes up when we are talking about the question “someone who is much older than me” or “pays for everything we do together” we talk about which person has more power, the older person or the younger person, the person always paying or the person always getting a free meal, etc.
• What do you think about a 25-year-old person going out with a 14-year-old person? What can be some advantages to being the older person in a relationship? The younger? The bigger one? The smaller? The decision-maker? The follower?
• When friends care about each other, how do they treat each other? How do they show respect for each other? List these on board/easel. Follow with the jealousy question or the pressure about sex question.
• How can boyfriends and girlfriends act responsibly toward each other? If people are not responsible in their relationships, what can happen?
Part 5: Practicing our Skills at Setting and Respecting Boundaries
25 minutes

Activity:
1. Choose one or more of the following scenarios to use for role-play depending on the age or specific needs of your group.

   Jorge and Tina are watching a movie together. Tina likes Jorge and wants to be more than just friends. Jorge likes Tina as a friend, but that’s it.

   Damien wants to go to the movies with Tom. Tom doesn’t think he can go because he has to clean his room and do homework.

   Isa keeps getting text messages from her boyfriend, Frank, asking her where she is and who is with. Isa wishes that Frank would trust her more and stop being so annoying.

2. Uncover the first scenario and ask for a volunteer to read it aloud.
3. Ask the group if this feels like a realistic scenario. If not, feel free to adjust the scenario(s) to make them more realistic.
4. Ask the group how the two people involved might be feeling. Write their answers on the board or on newsprint.
5. Ask for two people to volunteer to role play how the scene might look. Set some ground rules:
   a. The facilitator is now the director. The director can stop the role-play by calling out “STOP” at any time.
   b. If someone else in the group thinks that the scenario could be played out a different way they can raise their hand to jump in. The director can stop the role-play for the new person to jump in for whichever person they want to play.
   c. The facilitator can help guide the actors by prompting them to play characters in a different way.
6. Discussion
   • What were the verbal and nonverbal cues that set the boundaries in this scenario?
   • Were those boundaries respected? How or how not?
   • Could the boundaries have been made clearer? How?
   • Could they have been better respected? How?
   • What happens to our relationships when we don’t respect each other’s boundaries? Is it worth it?

7. If time allows ask the group to partner off and create their own scenario about physical or sexual boundaries in relationships. They can use their own personal boundaries or they can make some up if that feels more comfortable. Encourage one person to practice boundary setting out loud and the other person practice respecting boundaries by answering out loud.
8. Ask if anyone wants to share their conversation or how it felt to have a conversation about personal boundaries.
Part 6: Resources and Evaluation
10 minutes

Activity 1: Identifying adults to talk to.
1. “If someone crosses our boundaries or is abusive to us, who do we talk to about it?” (Make a list on the board.)
2. Sometimes what is happening is illegal and you might need an adult’s help because kids don’t have as many rights as adults. I want you all to take a minute to reflect on the adults in your life: parents, relatives, teachers, neighbors, friends’ parents, etc. Identify an adult in your life who you trust that you can talk to about these things.

Activity 2: Provide resources.
Maybe you want some more information before you talk to an adult, and that’s OK, too.

- BARCC hotline or website
- Safelink

Activity 3: Evaluation
Ask students:
1. What’s one thing you learned in today’s workshop?
2. Can you see yourself using some of the ideas you came up with in your own relationships?
**Worksheet: WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND?**

People have different ideas about what makes a good friend. This worksheet lists some of those ideas for **you** to “grade”.

**Directions:** First, to the Left side of each trait listed, write the grade (A, B, C, D, or F) that describes how important that behavior or quality is to you in a close friend. Then, do the same thing for a **boyfriend or girlfriend on the Right Side.**

- **A** = A must have     - **B** = Nice to have     - **C** = No strong feelings     - **D** = Not good     - **F** = Not desirable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Close Friend</th>
<th>BF/GF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is someone everyone likes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Treats me the same whether we’re alone or with other people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is older than I am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Likes the same activities, movies, or music that I do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gets jealous when I talk to other guys/girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is someone I can talk with about my feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is popular with the ‘in’ crowd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Talks about my body to other people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Doesn’t make fun of me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tells me the truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Gets along with my family and/or friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Doesn’t pressure me about sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Pays for most of the things we do together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Makes sure we both want to do any physical touching we do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Calls or text messages me all the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add any additional characteristics that you would want here:

---

1 This exercise has been adapted from *Unequal Partners: Power and Consent in Adult/Teen and other relationships* published by the Planned Parenthood of Greater New Jersey.
Facilitators Guide: WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND?

This worksheet is not to be thought of as a test with right or wrong answers but as a tool to help start and frame a meaningful discussion of healthy relationships. Most of the characteristics listed below will be disagreed upon by the group. The goal is not to bring consensus but to highlight the shared values of Honesty, Equality, Respect and Responsibility.

### Characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Is someone everyone likes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Participants will likely say this is either “no strong feelings” or “nice to have”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>It might be important to some people that their friends and family like the person because their friends and family are looking out for their best interest.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>It can be hard to date someone that you are constantly defending or hiding from the other important people in your life.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Treats me the same whether we’re alone or with other people</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>This characteristic can be linked to honesty. Participants often say that it is hard to trust someone who is “two faced.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>If how your friend or dating partner makes you feel varies depending on who is around then they aren’t respecting your feelings.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Is older than I am</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Teens <strong>LOVE</strong> debating this one. Sometimes responses will fall on gender lines with girls saying that this is “a must have” for them and boys saying “no strong feelings” or maybe is even “not desirable.” Before you even begin to discuss this one you might want to restate that there are no right answers so that everyone feels comfortable sharing their opinions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Also be prepared for questions about statutory rape law. In Massachusetts the age of consent is 16 years old. If someone is 16 or older and has sex with someone under the age of 16 it is considered statutory rape and it is illegal.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teens say that there are a lot of benefits to being friends with or dating someone who is older than you; they can drive, they are more mature, they can buy alcohol, you don’t have to worry about parents as much, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You can ask them what they see as some of the benefits of an older person dating a younger person? Often times teens will come up with reasons like; they are naïve, easily manipulated, or (be prepared to hear it!) “tight.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Ask if they think that relationships between a younger person and an older person are equal?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2 This exercise has been adapted from *Unequal Partners: Power and Consent in Adult/Teen and other relationships* published by the Planned Parenthood of Greater New Jersey.
4. Likes the same activities, movies, or music that I do

5. Gets jealous when I talk to other guys/girls
   - There is often a wide range of answers for this characteristic ranging from “not desirable” to “a must have.”
   - Jealousy is perceived by some teens as a measure of how much the other person likes them. “If he/she doesn’t get jealous they must not like you.”
   - Other teens will say that jealousy is annoying or even controlling and that you should be able to talk to whoever you want “as long as you are just talking”
   - Many teens will say that getting jealous is a sign that there is no trust (honesty) in the relationship.
   - Ask teens how they show that they are jealous or how others show jealousy. Can there be “too jealous?”

6. Is someone I can talk with about my feelings
   - Teens may differentiate between a dating partner and a close friend on this one; feel free to ask why there is a difference but try not to get bogged down in gender stereotypes and ask the group to only speak for themselves and not “all women” or “all men.”
   - Being able to talk about your feelings can help resolve conflicts in relationships. “When you always decide what movie we are going to see without asking me, I feel like you don’t value my opinion,” might go over better than, “You always pick stupid movies!”
   - This can be a sign of honesty

7. Is popular with the ‘in’ crowd
   - This characteristic is sometimes hard to translate for English Language Learners or students who are culturally diverse.

8. Talks about my body to other people
   - This is a characteristic that teens might disagree over.
   - It might be a compliment but it also might be uncomfortable and leave you feeling disrespected.

9. Doesn’t make fun of me
   - Abusive relationships aren’t just physical. If you are friends with someone or dating someone who is always putting you down it doesn’t feel good and it might be verbally or emotionally abusive.

10. Tells me the truth
    - Most teens will agree that this is important to them in their friendships and dating relationships. Again they will talk about the importance of trust and honesty.

11. Gets along with my family and/or friends
    - It might not be “cool” for a teen to want to spend time with their families but that doesn’t mean they don’t want their dating partner to be respectful of the other important relationships in their lives.
    - Many victims of dating violence feel isolated from their family and friends.
making it even harder to get out of the relationship or get help when they are ready.

12. Doesn’t pressure me about sex
   - When facilitating this with co-ed or all boys groups you can expect joking comments about this one. Ask the group to only speak for themselves and to not make blanket statements about “all men.”
   - They might be confused about how a friend can pressure them about sex. Ask about peer pressure and the “everyone’s doing it” mentality.
   - Ask the group to define “pressure.” Is it just physical?
   - Emphasize the fact that no matter your gender, your partners gender, whether you are friends or dating partners, how long you’ve been dating, or if you’ve had sex in the past, no one should pressure or force you to have sex. That is not respectful.

13. Pays for most of the things we do together
   - Again you might have a split down gendered lines. Remind participants that they can only speak for themselves and not for “all men” or “all women.”
   - This characteristic relates to equality. Ask participants who might have more power in the relationship?

14. Makes sure we both want to do any physical touching we do
   - This is similar to “pressures me about sex” but remind participants that touching can be a range of behaviors like hugging, hand holding, or kissing, and that sometimes people are OK with some kind of touching in private but not in public. For example, a GLBT youth might be concerned about kissing in public if they aren’t out to their parents yet.
   - This relates to respect.

15. Calls or text messages me all the time
   - This often has a range of answers from “not desirable” to “a must have.” Many teens will say they like the constant attention, especially if they are bored. Some will say it can be annoying, and some will say it feels controlling- like the other person doesn’t trust them.

Add any additional characteristics that you would want here:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix: Who, What, Where of Sexual Assault
Activity
1. Ask the group to come up with a definition for sexual assault. Provide the legal definition if they start arguing or specifically ask. If not, just reinforce that any sexual conduct that is unwanted is sexual violence and in most cases is illegal.

- **Rape**: Forced and non-consensual sexual penetration of any body part by another body part and/or object. A person is forced into sexual intercourse through threats, physical restraint, and/or physical violence. Consent cannot legally be given if a person is under the age of 16, mentally disabled, or incapacitated (intoxicated, drugged, unconscious, or asleep).

- **Indecent Assault and Battery**: Non-consensual, sexually offensive touching that does not include penetration.

2. Ask the group to brainstorm aloud what they picture when they think of a sexual assault.

- What do the assailant and the victim look like?
- How old are they?
- What is their relationship to each another?
- Where would sexual violence happen?
- Are there other kinds of physical violence in addition to the sexual assault?

3. After you have a pretty good idea of what the youth think rape looks like, ask the group where they got those ideas. (typical responses: TV shows like 'SVU', the news, movies from health class). Inform them of the following facts:

- **Both men and women (and trans) are survivors**: 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have experienced sexual violence over their lifetimes.

- **Most rapists are men but most men don’t rape**: 99.9% of women who have been assaulted were assaulted by a male perpetrator and 80% of men who have been assaulted were assaulted by a male perpetrator. Only a small percentage of men are physically and sexually aggressive towards women; these perpetrators assault others repeatedly.

- **It doesn’t happen in a dark alley**: 80% of sexual assaults occur in the home of the survivor or the home of the perpetrator.

- **Access to sex is not usually the motivation for the assault**: Children and the elderly are common targets for sexual abuse. Convicted rapists have said that at the time of the assault they had the option of having consensual sex with someone else.

- **It’s not strangers**: 93% of survivors who were assaulted before they turned 18 knew the person that assaulted them.

- **Trust is involved**: 1 in 5 teens report experiencing physical or sexual abuse in their dating relationships.

- **It is never the victims fault**: One of the reasons many victims of sexual violence do not report to the police or seek medical treatment or other support is because they think other people will blame them or judge them for what happened. If someone tells you they have been sexually assaulted it is important to believe them and not blame them. Examples of victim blaming would be when survivors get the message(s); “I told you not to drink so much/wear that outfit/go to that party/walk alone at night,” or “you must have been leading him/her on.” The only person responsible for sexual violence is the perpetrator.