

RAFT

Resilience for
Advocates through
Foundational Training®

Building Blocks to Resiliency Series: The Importance of Personal Boundaries

RAFT VIRTUAL TRAINING WORKBOOK



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ABOUT RAFT

RAFT supports organizations and advocates to cultivate human-centered workspaces through foundational wellness practices, resources, and training to build resilience and promote a healthier gender-based violence advocacy ecosystem.

VIRTUAL TRAINING OBJECTIVES

In this 2-hour workshop you will learn how to define personal boundaries and how to be “self-full” versus selfish.

You will:

- ★ Be able to define and know types of personal boundaries
- ★ Understand the importance and purpose of personal boundaries
- ★ Be able to identify healthy and unhealthy boundaries
- ★ Be aware of when boundaries are crossed

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Defining Boundaries

Personal Boundary

Guidelines, rules, or limits created by a person for herself that are reasonable, safe, and permissible ways for other people to treat her, as well as how she will respond when someone steps outside those limits. Statements of what a person will or won't do, and/or what they like and don't like.

Three Types of Boundaries



Physical Boundaries

Pertain to personal space, your personal bubble, and privacy. Examples: feelings around hugging, how close people can stand to you, who can touch you, who can be in your home, when people can be in your home, your private emails, etc.



Mental Boundaries

Pertain to beliefs, emotion, and intuition. Your right to have your own feelings, thoughts, and opinions. Examples: letting other's feelings dictate your own, sacrificing your needs for others, choosing what to share and with whom, not being forced to agree with other's opinions.



Spiritual Boundaries

Pertain to self-esteem, sense of identity, and faith. Protecting your right to believe in what you want and who you are. Examples: how you present yourself to others, feeling comfortable in your body, pronouns, saying a silent prayer.

Examples of Personal Boundaries

Healthy Boundaries

- ★ Standing up for your personal values
- ★ Giving as much as you can without depleting yourself
- ★ Taking as much as you need
- ★ Defining yourself and letting others know who you are
- ★ Fulfilling your own needs
- ★ Asking for help when you need it
- ★ Speaking up when you are mistreated - when it is safe to do so
- ★ Asking for consent before giving hugs or touching someone's hair

Unhealthy Boundaries

- ★ Going against your personal values to please others
- ★ Giving as much as you can for the sake of giving
- ★ Taking as much as you can for the sake of taking
- ★ Letting others define you
- ★ Expecting others to fill your needs without asking
- ★ Not speaking up when you are mistreated
- ★ Hugging or touching someone without their consent

Going to the Movies Exercise

ACTIVITY

Think of a recent situation, of light to medium intensity, where you were talking to someone and said "yes" to their request when you would have preferred to say "no", allowing one of your boundaries to be crossed. Now, imagine yourself walking into a movie theatre: getting your ticket, going to the concession stand and buying some popcorn or candy, walking down the dark aisle of the theater looking for an open seat. Once you find a seat you set your popcorn down, take off your coat, and settle in to watch.

The curtains part, the previews finish up, and finally the feature film begins: and there you and this person are, on the big screen, playing out the conversation you had where you said "yes" instead of saying "no".

Remember, you are watching a movie, so without any judgement watch the scene play out before you and do nothing except observe yourself in the situation:

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Reflection

What is happening to you during the conversation?

How are you standing/sitting? What are doing with your hands, eyes, your mouth?

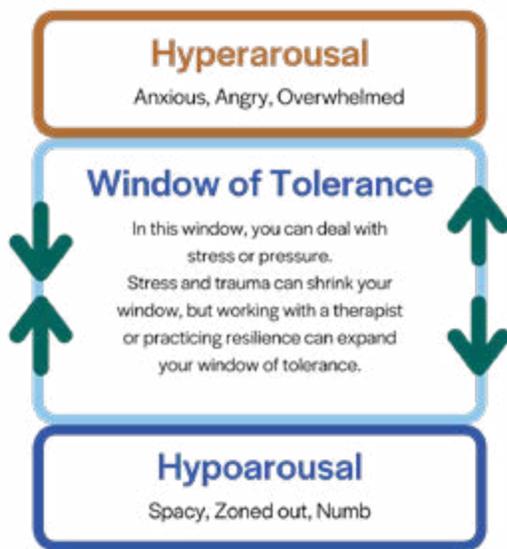
What are you hearing the person say? What are you saying back?

What are you thinking and feeling during the beginning of the conversation? At the moment when you say "yes" instead of "no?" As the conversation wraps up and after you have said yes?

During the conversation what did you notice about yourself? About your body language/thoughts/feelings?

What did you notice about the other person?

Window of Tolerance



The window of tolerance is a concept originally developed by Dr. Dan Siegel, MD to describe the optimal zone of "arousal" for a person to function in everyday life. When a person is operating within this zone or window, they can effectively manage and cope with their emotions.

The best way to expand your window of tolerance is to practice setting boundaries, and by utilizing other tools to help build your resilience.

Effects of Unhealthy Boundaries

Reasons for not setting boundaries

- ★ Fear.
- ★ Selfish to do so.
- ★ Unclear about your own values and beliefs.
- ★ Put other people first.
- ★ Confused.
- ★ Low self-esteem.
- ★ Cultural norms.

Why should you set personal boundaries?

- ★ To be physically safe and healthy.
- ★ To be emotionally safe and at peace.
- ★ To have a strong sense of identity and self-esteem.

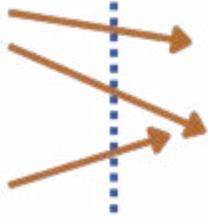
When you do not set personal boundaries, you can/will experience:

- ★ Fear, feelings of being unsafe, never at peace, anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, humiliation, and confusion.
 - ★ Physical manifestations like feeling sick, weak, and tired.
 - ★ Loss of confidence and self-esteem.
 - ★ Diminished intuition, belief structure, and values.
 - ★ Physical abuse, manipulation, coercion, and violation.
- * Note that not everyone will respect boundaries, no matter how well they are set.

The effects of continual stress/trauma on your body include:

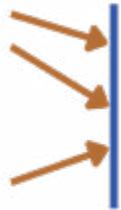
- ★ Chemical release (hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis).
- ★ Diminishing ability to make healthy decisions.
- ★ Organs awash with cortisol and adrenaline cause health problems.
- ★ PTSD, anxiety and depression.

Four Types of Psychological Boundaries



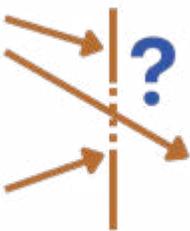
SOFT Boundaries

A person with soft boundaries merges with other people's boundaries. It is difficult to tell where one person ends and the other begins. Someone with a soft boundary is easily manipulated. **Example: always eating food your friend likes to avoid a conflict.**



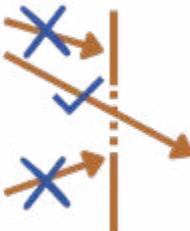
RIGID Boundaries

A person with rigid boundaries is closed or walled off so nobody can get close to him/her either physically or emotionally. This is often the case if someone has been physically, emotionally, and psychologically or sexually abused. Rigid boundaries can be selective and depend on time, place or circumstances. They are usually based on a bad previous experience in a similar situation. **Example: never eating food you didn't cook yourself.**



SPONGY Boundaries

A person with spongy boundaries is like a combination of having soft and rigid boundaries. Boundaries are inconsistent and can be erratic. They permit less emotional contagion than soft boundaries but more than rigid. People with spongy boundaries are unsure of what to let in and what to keep out. **Example: a person who enforces rules differently depending on their mood.**



FLEXIBLE Boundaries

This is the ideal. Similar to selective rigid boundaries but the person has more control. The person decides what to let in and what to keep out, is resistant to emotional contagion and manipulation, and is difficult to exploit. Flexible boundaries are controlled, intentional, and are made by choice. **Example: not accepting phone calls after 10pm unless it is your best friend.**

Reflection

What ways are you currently setting boundaries? (Soft, Rigid, Spongey, Flexible)

What are the reasons you do not set boundaries?

What would be the reasons for setting boundaries? What is the purpose?

Where can you start setting boundaries in your life?

What challenges do you foresee in implementing personal boundaries?