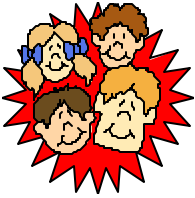


## WHAT ARE PERSONAL BOUNDARIES AND WHY DO I NEED THEM?

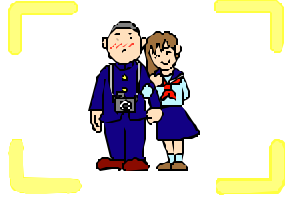


All emotionally healthy people have intact personal boundaries. Our boundaries define who we are to ourselves and other people. They let us know when we are being intruded upon by others or excluded. Our boundaries are a clear definition of our personal space, physically, emotionally, intellectually, sexually, and spiritually. Since all relationships have limits, it becomes important to let others know when we are uncomfortable with the way they are interacting with us. It also becomes our job to be sensitive when others are letting us know how we intrude upon or exclude them. It is important to give and receive this information from each other with mutual respect, unless someone is becoming abusive. If abuse is present, we must tell, speak up to someone who can help. If not, we **protect the abuser.**

As kids, our boundaries are set by other people, parents, teachers, adults. The limits they set are usually set around our personal safety and interactions with them and peers. These adults are responsible for not violating a child's boundaries even though they have the power to do so.

As we get older, it becomes important that we understand the necessity of protecting ourselves from the interactions of others by setting our own healthy limits and boundaries. Ideally, we have parents who have allowed us to experience our own power in this area by saying, “**NO**” respectfully to them and others who were hurting us. Now, here comes a really tricky part: When we do not **intentionally** hurt a person, it is hard for us to imagine how our

behavior can be or is hurtful. That is why it is so important for all of us to learn to be sensitive to the information others are giving us about our own interactions. Sometimes we are all hurtful, ***regardless of our intent***, and part of having healthy boundaries ourselves is about being willing to listen to others about how our behavior impacts them



Dating becomes an ideal opportunity and necessary time to set limits around the way you will allow yourself to be treated. Here are some guidelines you may want to follow as you begin to date:

- 1) No one has the right to hit you, force you to have sex or hurt you in any way.....ever!
- 2) Beware of 'friends' who:
  - a. Are very jealous
  - b. Try to keep you from family or friends
  - c. Try to control you
  - d. Use alcohol or other drugs
  - e. Have bad tempers
  - f. Feel entitled to treat you any way they want,
  - g. Will not honor your limits or boundaries or hear, "NO".
- 3) Never be afraid, too shy, or ashamed to ask for help and protection in ending any relationship that is harmful to you.
- 4) Never be afraid, too shy, or ashamed to report abuse of yourself or any other person

