



# Relationship Skills

## Setting Healthy Boundaries

### Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

When we think of setting boundaries our mind almost always goes directly to physical boundary setting. When you hear the phrase “no means no” it typically refers to setting boundaries for physical advances. However, emotional boundaries are just as important as physical ones, and they are sometimes even harder to set. Emotional boundaries are imperative to our mental wellbeing and taking care of our mental health. Boundaries range from rigid to loose, and most people’s healthy boundaries are a mix of both.

Examples of different types of boundaries:

Rigid	Loose	Healthy
You cut people out of your life after they make a mistake. You do not believe in second chances and will not accept apologies.	You over commit to things for fear of saying no or setting limits. Your schedule is constantly booked, and you have very little time for yourself.	You feel comfortable speaking your mind and standing up for what you believe is right.
You are not flexible. If your friend wants to get Italian for dinner, but you want Mexican, you will not budge, even if you picked last time.	You don't speak up if someone hurts your feelings or mistreats you.	You can recognize disrespect, manipulation, and other forms of being taken advantage of and try your best to rectify the situation.
You have surface level relationships and have trouble trusting others.	You are afraid of rejection or conflict, so you have trouble speaking your mind.	You are okay with alone time.
You take things very personally. You are highly sensitive to criticism or rejection.	You often take the blame for things that are out of your control. If the train is late and you and your friend miss part of your movie, you spend the rest of the night apologizing, even though it wasn't your fault.	You feel comfortable saying no.

### Key Takeaways:

- Students will understand the three different types of boundaries.
- Students will recognize when they set each type of boundary.
- Students will understand how to set appropriate boundaries.
- Students will understand how to respect the boundaries of others.

### Duration + Materials:

- 30 Minutes

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Rigid-** Unable to bend or be forced out of shape. Not flexible.
- **Imperative-** Of vital importance.
- **Capacity-** The maximum amount that something can contain.



Ways to ensure that you are setting healthy boundaries:

1. Say “no” to things you do not feel comfortable doing.
2. Say “yes” when you feel like you have the time and capacity to do something and when you really want to do it.
3. Ask for help when you need it.
4. Take space when you feel overwhelmed.

### Activity:

1. Teachers will use the pre-teaching language to explain the different types of boundaries.
2. Teachers will use the discussion questions to guide a conversation around boundary setting.
3. Teachers will provide students with the reflection sheet to complete at home and use to assess their own boundaries.
  - a. This should be personal to students and not be collected or graded.
  - b. However, teachers should remind students if they have questions or concerns that they are available to discuss with them any time.

### Discussion Questions:

1. When do you think is an appropriate time to set rigid boundaries?
2. When do you think is an appropriate time to have loose boundaries?
3. What is an example of a time you bent your boundaries for someone else?
4. When is a time you said “yes” to something, even if you did not want to?
5. What is an example of a healthy boundary?

### Supplemental Materials:

- Healthy Boundaries Reflection Sheet

### Reinforcement Activities:

1. Point out when you set a boundary during class.
  - a. Be explicit and say, “this is a rigid boundary for me, I do not tolerate XYZ in this class.”
  - b. Also point out when you see students setting healthy boundaries for themselves and be sure to respect them (when it’s appropriate to do so).

