

Boundaries



An easy way to think about boundaries is to imagine a house with a fence around it. The fence marks the boundary.

A “no trespassing” sign gives the message that you need to stop.

Do not climb the fence. Do not cross the boundary.

Now, a property boundary is easy to picture.

But, personal boundaries are invisible. And, each person decides where to put up their “No Trespassing” sign.

Setting Boundaries at Work

- **Boundaries are personal rules** about what feels okay or not okay.
- **Feeling uncomfortable** is a sign that someone might be too close or doing something that bothers you.
- **When someone asks for more space**, they are not being mean—they are just saying what makes them feel safe and comfortable.



Setting Boundaries At Work

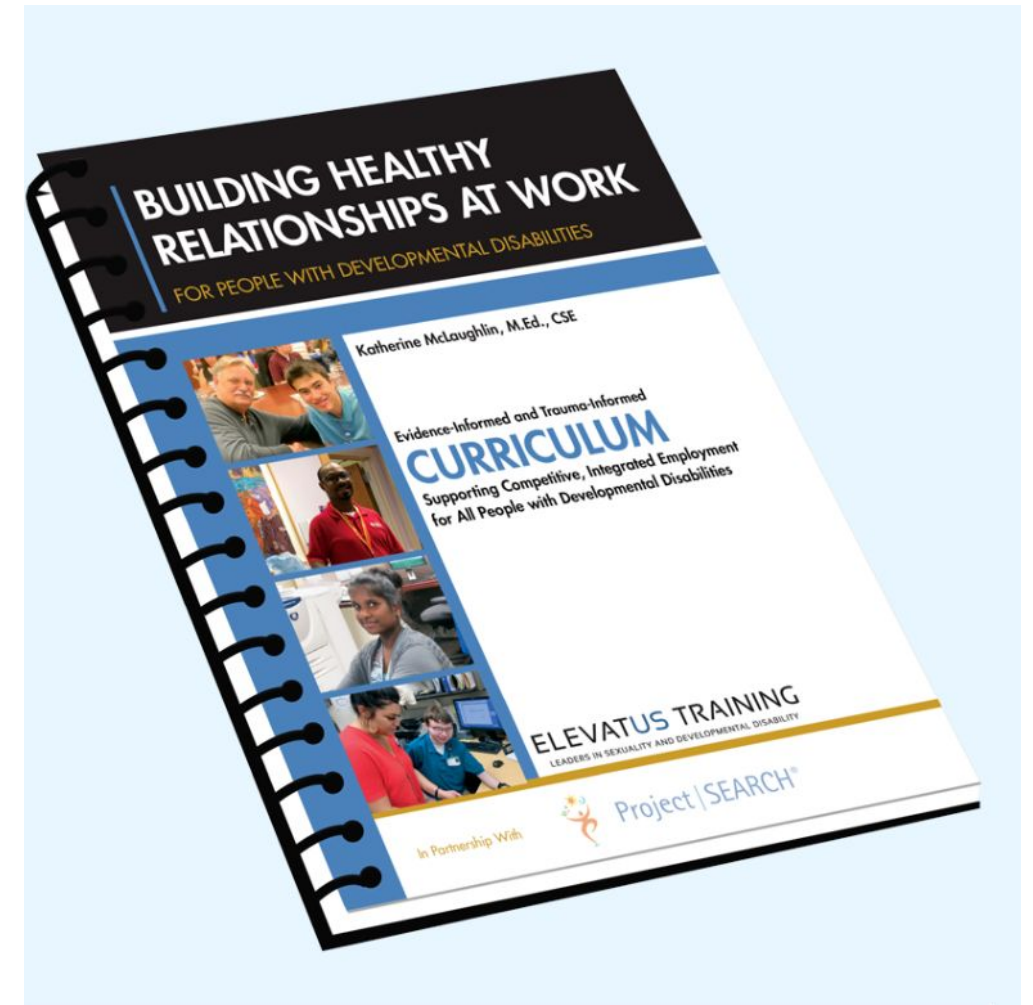
Learning to notice your own feelings and listen to others helps everyone get along better.

Having good boundaries at work means respecting other people's space and time, and also speaking up if someone is not respecting yours.

Curriculum: Building Healthy Relationships at Work

Have you witnessed employees losing their jobs not because they couldn't do the work but because of how they interacted with their co-workers and customers?

This curriculum, Building Healthy Relationships at Work, will help you teach people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities how to navigate all types of relationships, including co-worker relationships, and also how to become great employees.



<https://www.elevatustraining.com/workshops-and-products/curriculum-build-healthy-relationships/>

Activity One: What is Sexual Harassment?

Having good work boundaries means you don't bother others and you speak up when someone is bothering you.

Sometimes it can feel unsafe or uncomfortable to speak up. Not speaking up does not mean you are OK with things being done or said to you.

Have you heard the term “sexual harassment” before?

Sexual Harassment Terminology

Sexual Harassment = saying or doing sexual things that are not okay and make someone feel uncomfortable, especially at work or other group places.

Unwelcome = means the person does not want the comments or actions.

Inappropriate Sexual Remarks = are words or jokes that make someone feel upset, nervous, or uncomfortable.

These definitions were adapted by Green Mountain Self-Advocates to be in plain language.

Sexual Harassment

One problem with sexual harassment is that it can often be the same behavior that people use to flirt. It can be difficult to know if it is wanted vs. unwanted attention.

Examples:

Winking at someone

Complimenting someone on their appearance

Activity: Does This Cross A Boundary Line?

Here are examples of behaviors or actions. Does it cross a line of being sexual harassment or if it is OK to do and does not cross a line.

Questions to think about as you read examples:

Does this cross the line?

Could this make someone feel uncomfortable?



Activity: Does This Cross A Boundary Line?

Spreading rumors (stories about a person's sex life) about a co-worker.

Does this cross a line?

Could this make someone feel uncomfortable?

Why or why not?

Activity: Does This Cross A Boundary Line?

Telling your co-worker you like their shirt.

Does this cross a line?

Could this make someone feel uncomfortable?

Why or why not?

Let's look at some different behaviors and decide if they are sexual harassment or not.

Is this Sexual Harassment?

Would these be crossing a boundary? A limit? Or a rule?

Telling a sexual joke in the cafeteria.

Repeatedly calling a co-worker.

Buying a volunteer a cup of coffee.

Is this Sexual Harassment?

Would these be crossing a boundary? A limit? Or a rule?

Thanking your mentor for helping you the other day.

Saying to a co-worker, “nice boobs.”

Repeatedly asking co-workers out on a date after they said no.

Is this Sexual Harassment?

Would these be crossing a boundary? A limit? Or a rule?

Teasing about a person's sexual orientation.

Trying to touch a co-worker.

Kissing your partner in a closet at work with the door closed.

Is this Sexual Harassment?: Activity Debrief

Group Discussion Questions:

Which examples were easy to decide?

Which ones were more difficult to decide on? Why?

Speaking Up When Someone Crosses the Line

John is a worker at the local hospital. A girl who works in the gift shop keeps asking him out on a date. He is not interested in dating her. He says, “I don’t want to go out with you.” She keeps asking every time he passes the gift shop. He is starting to take the long way to get back to his department to avoid seeing her. He doesn’t like this behavior, and since she keeps crossing the line by asking over and over, he is starting to feel unsafe.

Lesson 11: Healthy Boundaries at Work

Small Group Discussion



Speaking Up When Someone Crosses the Line

Help John figure out how to communicate his boundaries in small groups. Fill in the blank spaces with one or more words John could say.

“I feel _____ when you
_____ because _____.”
What I want is _____.”

Discussion

1. Have you had situation at work where people crossed one of your boundaries?
2. How did you handle it?



Reminder of Workplace Policies

- **Sexual harassment is very serious.** It can lead to losing your job or even legal trouble.
- If you're not sure what is okay to say or do at work, ask your job coach or someone you trust.
- If you're not sure who it's okay to date at work, get help from someone you trust to ask the right person in our company about the rules.
- If someone is bothering you or making you feel unsafe, tell someone you trust. Work together to fix the problem.
- **Harassment is not just about sex.** It can also be about someone's religion, disability, race, or background. If you ever feel unsafe or unsure, talk to someone you trust.

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Main Points

- Healthy boundaries at work help you do a good job and keep your job.
- Having healthy boundaries means you understand and follow the rules at work.
- You should not flirt with or ask out co-workers or customers. That would be crossing a boundary and is not okay.

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Main Points Continued...

- Flirting and sexual harassment can look the same, but the big difference is if the other person wants it or not.
- If you cross a someone's boundary and they tell you, you should say you're sorry. Tell them you won't do it again.
- If someone crosses your boundary, it is important to speak up. It is your right to speak up. Use the tips on slide 17 to practice what you can say.
- If you think you are being sexually harassed, talk with your boss and someone you trust.

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