Communication and Boundaries

Professional Development and Leadership Program
Session Objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Define the term “communication” and identify examples of good communication.
- Define the term “boundaries” and explain the importance of establishing personal and professional boundaries.
- Establish personal and professional boundaries and recognize and respect other people’s boundaries.
What Is Communication?

Communication is an exchange of information, with a sender and a receiver of information.
What Are Boundaries?

A boundary indicates or fixes a limit or extent.

Source: Merriam Webster Dictionary
Why Are Boundaries Important?

- Boundaries provide structure.
- Boundaries help us to maintain focus.
- Boundaries allow for effective communication.
How Do You Recognize Boundaries?

Some boundary identifiers include:

- Body language
- Cultural norms
- Verbal direction

#CommunicationFail
How Do You Establish Boundaries?

- Clearly communicate boundaries early in relationships.
- Discuss cultural differences.
- Voice preferences clearly, directly, and appropriately.

Preferences may include:
- Availability for communication
- Frequency of communication
- Methods of communication
How Can We Manage Boundaries?

- Be present and self-aware.
- Actively listen to the sender.
- Respect the sender’s boundaries.
- Continuously monitor communication from the sender.
- Modify boundaries, as needed.
Apply Your Knowledge: Act It Out!

Find a partner and make up two scenarios:

- One scenario that you have actually experienced
- One scenario with a ridiculous request

**Real Examples**
- Your boss asks you to work overtime but you do not want to.
- Someone is relying on you too much, and you are feeling burnt out.

**Ridiculous Examples**
- Your boss asks you to build a spaceship.
- Your coworker asks you to do all their work for the next year.

Role play how you would handle each scenario for the next five minutes. Practice different ways of setting boundaries.
We are going to review five scenarios. After we present each scenario, move to the corner with the letter that corresponds most accurately to your response. Be prepared to share the reason(s) for your choice.
Scenario #1

Your mother invites you to dinner, but you already have plans. What would you do?

A. *Tell her that you are busy and suggest a different time.*

B. *Change your plans to avoid upsetting her.*

C. *Feel obligated to try to do dinner with your mom and keep your other plans, too.*
Scenario #2

Your coworker is about to miss a deadline and begs for help finishing a project. You also have a deadline for your own work. What would you do?

A. **Tell your coworker that you are too busy and focus on your work.**

B. **Work overtime to try to help your coworker meet their deadline and meet your own deadline.**

C. **Tell your coworker that you cannot help, but immediately feel guilty.**
Scenario #3

While you are at dinner with friends, your child jumps in your lap and starts climbing on you like you are a jungle-gym. What would you do?

A. Shift your focus away from your friends and try keep your child occupied and happy.

B. Keep talking with your friends while peering around your child.

C. Tell your child to either sit still or to play on floor.
Scenario #4

Your significant other is overweight and really enjoys eating fried food. They want order a hamburger and fries for dinner. What would you do?

A. *Insist that they order a healthier option.*

B. *Explain that you are concerned that their health issues could negatively affect your relationship.*

C. *Let them order what they want but give them the silent treatment while they eat.*
Your friend tells several offensive jokes at a party you are attending. What would you do?

A. **Cringe and look away, hoping that they will notice your disapproval and stop.**

B. **Take them aside later and tell them that you were uncomfortable with what they said.**

C. **Say nothing because no one else at the party seemed to mind.**
Stoplight Activity

Think of one thing for each of the following:

❖ One thing you want to start doing (green light)
❖ One thing you want to slow down and consider further (yellow light)
❖ One thing you want to stop doing (red light)
Boundaries help us:

- Promote self-awareness
- Establish healthy communication
- Facilitate continued open communication
- Stay focused on our goals
- Increase the effectiveness of our interactions
Questions?