


CREATING BOUNDARIES*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

 **Time:** 60 minutes

 **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Outline the role of the peer educator and limitations;
- Understand why professional boundaries are needed and useful;
- Understand when and how to use professional boundaries with colleagues and clients.

 **Training Methods:** Large Group Activity, Small Group Activity, Large Group Report Back

 **In This Activity You Will...**

- Lead an icebreaker and discussion about boundaries (20 minutes).
- Lead a discussion about values (10 minutes).
- Break the group into four groups to discuss values (20 minutes).
- Facilitate a full group discussion about values (10 minutes).

 **Materials:**

- Flipchart, markers
- Handout - Creating Boundaries
- Answer Key- Creating Boundaries
- Handout - My Personal Story Worksheet (optional)
- Handout - Values

 **Preparation:**

- Print handouts

Instructions

1. Have the participants form 2 lines 10 feet apart and face each other. One line will be A's and one line will be B's. Pairs will be created with the person directly in front of them.
2. Tell the A's that they are going to walk slowly towards the B's. The B's will stand still and when they start to feel uncomfortable with how close the A's are coming towards them, put their hands up with their palms facing A's.
3. Emphasize that there is no "right" or "wrong" distance, it's a matter of personal comfort. There will be some giggling, but encourage the group to do this silently and to really pay attention to their feelings.
4. Repeat the activity but mix up the pairs so the B's get to walk towards a different person in the A line.
5. After the pairs have done this, ask everyone to return to their seats and process by asking such questions as:
 - How did it feel to be B and to have the power to stop the other person?
 - How did it feel to be A and not have the power?
 - What does this have to do with being a peer advocate/educator?
 - Who has the power in that relationship to set boundaries?
 - How might you feel if a client sets boundaries that are farther away than you'd like?
 - How might you feel if her boundaries are closer than yours?
 - We've been looking at physical boundaries, but what other kinds of boundaries are important for us to set?
 - What are some safe ways to let others know our boundaries?
6. Through our discussion today we have seen that peer advocates face many challenges and to avoid burnout we need to create boundaries and limitations for ourselves.
7. Ask: How might someone go about creating boundaries with their clients who have many needs? Give participants the Creating

* This module comes from the Lotus Women's Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.

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Boundaries handout and tell them they can take notes on that if they choose. Review the Creating Boundaries handout and ask participants what they would do. Use answer key if necessary.

8. Let's discuss values. Ask the following questions, taking several responses to each:

- What's a value?
- Where do values come from?

9. Generally, we feel pretty strongly about our values; after all, they came from our families, our religious beliefs or other influences that we hold dear. When our values come in conflict with someone else's values, that's often pretty difficult to handle and brings up some strong feelings.

10. Some of our values may be challenged in our work as peer advocates, and it's important to continue to check-in with ourselves to see how our values mesh with the work that we are doing. If we find ourselves feeling very stressed, that may be a sign that our values are in conflict with our work.

11. Break participants into 4 groups. Each group should discuss with their group whether they agree or disagree with the value statements on Values Handout and why you feel that way. Remember this activity is not about who is right or wrong but sharing various view points and listening to each other.

12. Next, each group should discuss the questions on the bottom of the handout and take notes on the responses to share with the larger group.

- a. What did you learn about yourself and others?
- b. What values informed your choices?
- c. Was it hard to express disagreement with another person's value(s)? Why or why not?

- d. Were there times when you felt uncomfortable or unsafe? What helped you stand by your values at that time?
- e. Were there any times when you felt unable to stand for your values? When and why do you think that was so?
- f. What would support people at times when they feel unable to stand up for a value they believe in?

13. Ask each group to report back on 1-2 of the above questions to the larger group.

14. At the end of the session, you may distribute the handout My Personal Story Worksheet for participants to take home.

Summary

- Wrap up by reminding the participants that the responsibility of peer advocates is not to convince people to change behaviors that they believe is wrong or not a part of their own values, even if it's risky. Our responsibility is to make sure that people have the information they need, have the chance to develop the skills they need, and have the support to explore their own beliefs and values so that they can make healthy decisions.
- The more we let our personal values into our work, the more likely it is that we will close the door with someone. Clients are more likely to trust us and to learn from us if they see us as non-judgmental.
- Acknowledge that this is a tough challenge and will continue to be so. We're here because we care about our clients' health, and it's really hard to watch someone do things that aren't healthy. But by providing support and keeping the door open, we have a much better chance of really helping her than if we try to change her.

* This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from the Lotus Women's Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.

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SESSION HANDOUT # 1 of 3

CREATING BOUNDARIES

HOW TO CREATE BOUNDARIES	HOW WILL I DO THIS
Open communication with clients	
Follow through with your promises in a timely manner	
Address your limitations	
Seek support from your supervisor	
Refer, refer, refer	
It is OK to not know	
Don't feel pressured to share your story each and every time	
Being professional	
Putting your personal values aside	

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SESSION ANSWER KEY

CREATING BOUNDARIES ANSWER KEY

HOW TO CREATE BOUNDARIES	HOW WILL I DO THIS
Open communication with clients	Let clients know what they can expect from you and what you expect from them from the beginning and be straightforward.
Follow through with your promises in a timely manner	Limit rescheduling or canceling appointments made with your clients.
Address your limitations	Let clients know what you are able to do and what you can't do. Share your roles of peer educator with them at first meeting. Tell them your hours and how they can reach you.
Seek support from your supervisor	If you don't know what to do or what is appropriate, make sure to contact other co-workers and peers. Always have supervisor's number on hand for emergencies.
Refer, refer, refer	You can't do everything so make sure you have a good, updated list of referrals. Make sure you are personally familiar with the referrals before sending clients to them. Take the time out to visit organizations and find contacts at those referrals. Follow through with the referrals.
It is OK to not know	Tell the client you don't know and that you will look into the information. Remember it is a learning process.
Don't feel pressured to share your story each and every time	Share what is appropriate, needed and within your comfort zone. See handout for reference: My Personal Story Worksheet
Being professional	Being organized, timely, efficient, and follow-through.
Putting your personal values aside	See Discussion

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SESSION HANDOUT # 2 of 3

MY PERSONAL STORY WORKSHEET

1. In what context will you be sharing your story (i.e., prevention education, family planning, issue awareness, public at large)?
2. Why are you telling your story? What is the purpose? What do you want people to get out of it?
3. Who is your audience? How might your audience affect the way you tell your story (i.e., language, level of formality, personal appearance)?
4. How will you structure questions and comments from the audience?
5. What is your story?
 - Main events/experiences relevant to your story.
 - Identify 3-5 main points/messages to be included.
 - How can you make it interactive? What questions do you want the audience to answer?
 - What questions do you expect the audience to ask?

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VALUES

Value Statements

Do I agree or disagree with these? And why?

1. Sexual intercourse is appropriate only between married people.
2. Birth control should be available to youth without parental consent.
3. Men who have sex with other men are responsible for the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
4. It should be a crime for anyone infected with HIV to have sexual intercourse without telling her/his sexual partner.
5. Postponing sexual intercourse is the only message we should give youth about sexual behavior.
6. When a man and a woman have sexual intercourse, contraception should be the woman's responsibility.
7. Young woman/man who carries condoms or has them readily available are easy.
8. A young woman walking alone at night in tight sexy clothing is asking to be harassed.
9. People living with HIV/AIDS should be allowed to work in restaurants and prepare food.
10. People who use drugs and get HIV should not receive medical benefits and services.
11. Sex education and disease prevention messages should not include gay/lesbian sex since it is against most people's religion.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn about yourself and others?
2. What values informed your choices?
3. Was it hard to express disagreement with another person's value(s)? Why or why not?
4. Were there times when you felt uncomfortable or unsafe? What helped you stand by your values at that time?
5. Were there any times when you felt unable to stand for your values? When and why do you think that was so?
6. What would support people at times when they feel unable to stand up for a value they believe in?