



Healthy Boundaries:
Working Closely with Youth and Families

A Webinar for the Indiana Youth Institute

Agenda

- I. Overview
- II. Why Boundaries Matter
- III. What is a Boundary? (Definition, Risks/Rewards, Common Issues)
- IV. Case Study Review
- V. Strategies for Maintaining Healthy Boundaries
- VI. Questions and Answers

Overview

- Indiana Youth Institute & Indiana Mentoring Partnership collaboration with Mass Mentoring Partnership
- Mass Mentoring Partnership mission and services
- In the relationship development business
- Content, Scenarios, Q&A

Why Boundaries Matter



Forming relationships with people is central to our work. It is in those relationships where progress happens.

Why Boundaries Matter

- Youth, Families, Co-workers, Providers....Impact is often connected to the process of building that relationship
- In the context of mentoring, the tool of change *is* that relationship
- As relationships develop, boundary issues become more relevant – Stages of the Relationship
- Clarity on boundaries provides more clarity on expectations, roles and path to desired outcomes

Why Boundaries Matter

Confusing

Uneven
expectations

Safety

Disclosure

Disappointment

Modeling
behavior

Unhealthy
dependence

Mixed
Messages

What matters most

What is a boundary?

‘Something that indicates a border or a limit.’



What is a boundary?

- Sometimes, not always, the difference between right vs. wrong
- Often times, the gray area the exists around an interaction, activity, behavior or communication that can impact a relationship
- The presence of something that will impact how the relationship develops, good or bad

What is a boundary?

Types of Boundaries

- Physical (contact, appearance, norms)
- **Social** (topics, activities, events)
- **Emotional** (disclosure, communication, information)

What is a boundary?

Risks and Rewards

- Building trust through disclosure
- Modeling healthy communication
 - Showing support and care
 - Creating safe space
- Exposure to new and diverse things

What is a boundary?

Common Boundary Issues

- Money - “The bus fare”
- Social Networking – “Friend me!”
- Information Disclosure – “How old were you when...”
- The “kitchen sink” – “But what about...”



Case Study Review

- Mike, a 7th grader, has been matched with his mentor for about six months now
- They always take advantage of the group events that the agency puts on
- One of the program coordinators and one of the outreach workers always attend these events
- Recently Mike asked the program coordinator why she didn't like him as much as the outreach worker does. When asked why he thought that, Mike said that she must like him more because she gave him her phone number and email address and said that he could reach out to her whenever he needed something. Plus, she just accepted his friend request on Facebook. Since the program coordinator had not done that, Mike assumed that she liked him less.

Case Study Review

- The Issue
- Perspectives
- Challenge
- Potential Solution

Case Study Review

- Through the intake and the referral of services process, it has become clear that Maya and her family have various issues that they are dealing with that are outside of the scope of your program
- Recently when Maya came to pick up her son after program she asked the case manager if she could borrow \$20 for dinner
- The case manager knew that the family struggles financially so she let her borrow the \$20 but told her that it's not something that she can do all the time
- The following week, one of Maya's sons came to the program to meet his mentor and did not have the \$10 that each participant was supposed to bring for a special activity. The mentor told the case manager and the case manager gave her son the \$10
- As the program has continued, Maya has asked to borrow money more than once and it has become clear that now the mentor feels like he is paying for the child more often than expected as well

Case Study Review

- The Issue
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Strategies for Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

Establish clear expectations

- As we begin...
- What do you expect? This is what I expect.
- Rules & Regulations
- Together we can find solutions
- In the past...

Strategies for Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

Clarity of Roles

- Resource broker rather than resource provider
- This is what I am suppose to do. This is what they are suppose to do.
- Guide, Support and Coach you, so that you can make it happen!
- Over time
- Sometimes it will not be clear....so we will talk it out

Strategies for Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

Help Me!

- Ask for support when needed
- Don't respond in the moment if unsure
- Anticipate the line or limit, if possible
- What do others do
- Remember, the stronger the relationship the more challenging these issues become

Strategies for Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

Course Correction

- Address issues as they happen; Don't avoid them
- “This is an example of...”
- As we work to develop our friendship/relationship/connection, we need to make sure that...
- Be consistent; in our actions and responses

Questions & Answers

Resources

- Marty Martinez, Chief Program Officer, Mass Mentoring Partnership, mmartinez@massmentors.org; 617-695-2448
- The Mentoring Group; Tips on how to handle boundary challenges http://www.mentoringgroup.com/html/articles/mentor_35.htm
- National Institute of Health – Mentoring Program Boundaries trainingcenter.nih.gov/pdf/mentoring/mentor-mentee_boundaries.pdf
- Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota – Boundary Handout www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_1113.pdf
- First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships www.mpmn.org/Files/First_Do_No_Harm_Rhodes_Liang_Spencer.pdf