

# ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES AND SETTING LIMITS

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## ***Lesson Objective:***

***Identify what a boundary does and does not do and examine how to set appropriate boundary lines***

## **ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES**

A boundary is like a fence or property line. It distinguishes between what is yours and what belongs to someone else. It also distinguishes between what you are responsible for and areas that are not your responsibility. The boundary is necessary for healthy functioning and ultimately helps to keep people and relationships safe. When you set a boundary, you are taking responsibility for your own thoughts, feelings, behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. You are taking charge of your time, money, energy, and choices. This handout will help you understand limits and set appropriate boundaries with others.

## **WRITING YOUR STORY**

Have you had trouble drawing boundaries in the past? Write your experiences where you established boundaries or had difficulty doing so. Include specific examples that illustrate your effectiveness or your difficulty. Is there someone in your life with whom you need to draw better boundaries? Do you have trouble doing so? How has drug addiction or alcohol problems compromised your boundaries?

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## **PURPOSE OF BOUNDARIES**

Whether you are working hard to break an addiction or are the loved one of an addict, it is important to understand the purpose of boundaries. Sometimes you are the one setting a boundary and sometimes others are setting boundaries for you. As you continue in recovery, it is good to step into the shoes of your loved one and start to see boundaries from their perspective. What once looked obnoxious or excessive, upon a closer examination, may have ultimately been for your benefit and encouraged your recovery, even though you felt opposed. Whatever the case, boundaries are essential for long-term recovery.