

Negotiating Boundaries

With compassion and collaboration

Time
45 to 60 minutes

Group
Pairs

Skills
Validation, EPE, reflections

1. What happened

Fill this in on your own, then share it with your partner.

The boundary	
Their view, in a few words	
My view, in a few words	
How I communicated it	
What went well	
What could have gone better	

2. Practicing skills

Work these out with your partner.

Validating feelings, needs or experience	
Affirming strengths, values or effort	
A double-sided reflection	
A reframe	

3. Strategies to try

Strategy 1	
Strategy 2	

Facilitator notes

Part 1: Brainstorm and discussion

- 1 Boundaries.** Talk through when they're needed, why they matter, how they can go wrong, and why compassion and collaboration help.
- 2 Strategy brainstorm.** Gather ideas on the board and sort them from helpful to not-so-helpful. Helpful ones often include making an exception, validating, referring to a resource, clarifying roles, taking a breather, and pointing to agency policy. Less helpful ones include placating, arguing, lecturing and over-explaining.
- 3 Fill in part 1.** Each person thinks of a recent boundary with a client, family member or friend that they're comfortable sharing.
- 4 Swap.** Hand your sheet to your partner and talk it through.
- 5 Build skills.** Partners interview each other to shape validation, affirmations, reframes and double-sided reflections. The storyteller leads; the partner offers ideas only when asked, using EPE.
- 6 Strategize.** Together, develop strategies for each situation.

Part 2: Role play

- 1** Review EPE.
- 2** Role play the situation with your partner. Try one strategy, both, or something new, and help each other along.
- 3** After each round, the person playing the client gives feedback using EPE.