

Demarcation portfolio



Overview of the activity

This method helps participants learn about and apply various forms of demarcation to reduce stress and improve their life balance. Participants explore spatial, temporal, social, and mental-emotional boundaries while creating a personalized portfolio of boundary-setting strategies.

Learning goal

Participants will:

- Consciously set boundaries between and within different areas of their lives.
- Identify and apply four types of demarcation strategies (spatial, temporal, social, mental-emotional).
- Develop personalized strategies for avoiding overwhelm and using resources effectively.

Target group

Age range: youngsters (16-25)

Group size: 4-20 participants

Duration

60 minutes

Format

- ☒ In-person ☒ Adaptable to digital format
- ☐ Included in learning platform

Materials

- A4 paper or devices with an internet connection
- Pens

☒ Included in this activity:

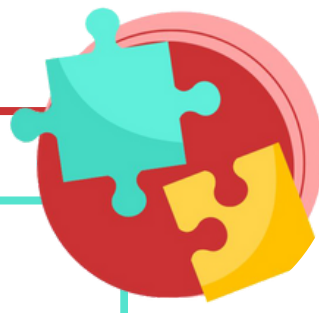
"Demarcation portfolio" worksheet

"Four types of boundaries" guide

"Self-reflection" worksheet

"Boundary strategy development" guide

Boundaries scenarios card set



How to implement

Step 1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- Present the four types of boundaries with clear definitions.
- Share real-life examples of each demarcation type.
- Explain the connection between boundaries and stress reduction.

Step 2. Self-reflection (10 minutes)

- Participants use the "Self-reflection" worksheet.
- Individual contemplation: "Who or what do I need to set boundaries with and why?".
- Encourage honest assessment of current boundary challenges.

Step 3. Strategy development (10 minutes)

- Brainstorming session using the "Strategy development guide".
- Participants generate individual options for each type of demarcation.
- Focus on practical, achievable strategies.

Step 4. Portfolio creation (20 minutes)

- Participants complete their personal "Demarcation portfolio" template.
- Include specific measures for each boundary type.
- Design actionable implementation plans.

Step 5. Feedback and conclusion (10 minutes)

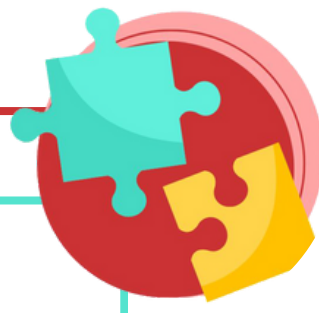
- Open group discussion about insights and challenges.
- Optional written reflection using guiding questions.
- Peer experience sharing and support.

Tips for use

- Use as individual reflection followed by group sharing.
- Works well in hybrid/online setups with breakout rooms.
- Encourage open sharing but allow silence for reflection.
- Approach with sensitivity - boundary setting often involves personal issues.
- Use concrete examples to illustrate each demarcation type.
- Offer visual examples to stimulate creativity.
- Allow sufficient time for deep reflection and meaningful discussion.
- Use breakout rooms (online) or small groups (offline) for deeper discussions.

Digital implementation ideas:

- Interactive PDF for direct input.
- Drag-and-drop exercises for categorizing boundary examples.
- Collaborative whiteboard for strategy brainstorming.
- Video scenarios or illustrated examples for better understanding.



Tools & downloads 🧩

Tool

-  *"Demarcation portfolio" worksheet*
-  *"Four types of boundaries" guide*
-  *"Self-reflection" worksheet*
-  *"Boundary strategy development" guide*
-  *Boundaries scenarios card set*



My Personal Demarcation Portfolio

Name: _____ Date: _____

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio will help you create personalized strategies for setting healthy boundaries in different areas of your life. Complete each section thoughtfully, focusing on practical and achievable goals.

Spatial demarcation

Creating physical boundaries and separate spaces.

Current Challenge:

What spaces or environments make it difficult for you to maintain boundaries?

My Strategy:

How will you create or improve physical separation in your spaces?

Specific Actions:

- Action 1: _____
- Action 2: _____
- Action 3: _____

Success Indicator:

How will you know this strategy is working?

My Personal Demarcation Portfolio

Temporal demarcation

Setting time boundaries and schedules

Current Challenge:

Where do you struggle with time boundaries in your daily life?

My Strategy:

How will you create better time boundaries and structure?

Specific Actions:

- Action 1: _____
- Action 2: _____
- Action 3: _____

Success Indicator:

How will you know this strategy is working?

My Personal Demarcation Portfolio

Social demarcation

Managing relationships and social boundaries

Current Challenge:

Which people or social situations drain your energy or create stress?

My Strategy:

How will you create healthy distance or boundaries with others?

Specific Actions:

- Action 1: _____
- Action 2: _____
- Action 3: _____

Success Indicator:

How will you know this strategy is working?

My Personal Demarcation Portfolio

Mental-emotional demarcation

Breaking free from negative thought patterns and emotional overwhelm

Current Challenge:

What negative thoughts, worries, or emotional patterns affect you most?

My Strategy:

How will you create mental and emotional distance from these patterns?

Specific Actions:

- Action 1: _____
- Action 2: _____
- Action 3: _____

Success Indicator:

How will you know this strategy is working?

My Personal Demarcation Portfolio

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Week:

What 2-3 small steps will you take this week?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

This Month:

What larger changes will you work toward this month?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Potential Obstacles:

What might prevent you from implementing these strategies?

Support System:

Who can help you maintain these boundaries?

My Personal Demarcation Portfolio

REFLECTION SPACE

Key Insights:

What did you learn about yourself while creating this portfolio?

Priority Focus

Which type of demarcation is most important for you right now?

Commitment Statement:

Write a personal commitment to yourself about boundary setting:

Remember: Healthy boundaries are not walls – they are gates with you as the gatekeeper. Start small, be consistent, and be patient with yourself as you develop these new habits.

Four Types of Boundaries

– Quick Reference Guide

SPATIAL DEMARCATION

Definition: *Creating physical separation between different areas of your life*

Examples

- Separate workspace from living area at home
- Designate specific rooms for specific activities
- Create physical barriers (screens, furniture arrangement)
- Use different locations for different purposes

Key Questions: Where do I need clearer physical boundaries? How can I better organize my physical spaces? What environments support my well-being?

Simple Strategies:

- Use a specific chair only for work
- Keep work materials in a designated area
- Create a "transition zone" between spaces
- Establish phone-free zones

TEMPORAL DEMARCATION

Definition: *Setting clear time boundaries and schedules*

Examples

- Fixed work hours with clear start/stop times
- Scheduled breaks and leisure time
- Protected time for hobbies and self-care
- Designated "offline" hours

Key Questions: When do I need to be more protective of my time? What activities deserve dedicated time slots? How can I transition better between activities?

Simple Strategies:

- Use timers for focused work periods
- Schedule personal time like important meetings
- Create transition rituals between activities
- Set specific times for checking emails/messages

Four Types of Boundaries

– Quick Reference Guide

SOCIAL DEMARCATION

Definition: Managing relationships and social interactions

Examples

- Spending time alone or with supportive people
- Limiting contact with energy-draining individuals
- Saying no to unnecessary social commitments
- Creating distance from toxic relationships

Key Questions: Which relationships energize vs. drain me? Where do I need to practice saying "no"? How can I cultivate more supportive connections?

Simple Strategies:

- Schedule regular solo time
- Practice polite but firm responses to requests
- Seek out communities aligned with your values
- Limit time with negative or demanding people

MENTAL-EMOTIONAL DEMARCATION

Definition: Creating distance from negative thought patterns and emotional overwhelm

Examples

- Breaking free from worry cycles
- Limiting negative media consumption
- Practicing mindfulness and grounding techniques
- Seeking positive role models and influences

Key Questions: What thoughts or emotions overwhelm me most? How can I interrupt negative thinking patterns? Where do I need more emotional support?

Simple Strategies:

- Use thought-stopping techniques
- Practice daily mindfulness or meditation
- Limit news and social media consumption
- Connect with inspiring people and content
- Develop positive self-talk habits

Four Types of Boundaries

– Quick Reference Guide

INTEGRATION TIPS

- **Start Small:** Choose one type of boundary to focus on first
- **Be Consistent:** Small, regular actions are more effective than dramatic changes
- **Practice Self-Compassion:** Boundary setting is a skill that takes time to develop
- **Communicate Clearly:** Let others know about your boundaries respectfully but firmly
- **Regular Review:** Check in with yourself weekly about how your boundaries are working
- **Flexibility:** Adjust your boundaries as your life circumstances change

COMMON BOUNDARY CHALLENGES

- **Guilt:** Remember that healthy boundaries benefit everyone in the long run
- **Pushback:** Some people may resist your new boundaries – this is normal
- **Inconsistency:** It takes time to establish new habits – be patient with yourself
- **Over-Rigid:** Boundaries should be flexible gates, not impenetrable walls
- **All-or-Nothing:** You don't need perfect boundaries everywhere at once

QUICK ASSESSMENT

Rate yourself (1-5) on each boundary type:

- **Spatial:** How well do you maintain physical boundaries? ____/5
- **Temporal:** How well do you protect your time? ____/5
- **Social:** How well do you manage relationship boundaries? ____/5
- **Mental-Emotional:** How well do you guard your mental space? ____/5

Focus Area: Which score is lowest? Start there!

Self-reflection worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

PART A. CURRENT BOUNDARY ASSESSMENT

1. Energy audit

Think about your typical week. For each area below, note what gives you energy (+) and what drains your energy:

Spaces/Environments:

- Energizing: _____
- Draining: _____

Time/Schedule:

- Energizing: _____
- Draining: _____

People/Relationships:

- Energizing: _____
- Draining: _____

Thoughts/Mental patterns:

- Energizing: _____
- Draining: _____

2. Boundary Violations

When do you feel most overwhelmed or stressed? Describe 2-3 specific situations:

Situation 1:

- What happened: _____
- How it made me feel: _____
- What boundary was crossed: _____

Situation 2:

- What happened: _____
- How it made me feel: _____
- What boundary was crossed: _____



Self-reflection worksheet

PART B. DEEPER REFLECTION

3. *Boundary Reliefs*

Complete these sentences honestly:

"Setting boundaries makes me feel..."

"When others don't respect my boundaries, I..."

"The hardest part about saying 'no' is..."

"I learned about boundaries from..."

4. *Values and Priorities*

My top 5 values/priorities in life are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

How well do my current boundaries protect these values?

5. *Future Vision*

If I had perfect boundaries, my life would look like:

The first thing I would change is:



Self-reflection worksheet

PART C. READINESS FOR CHANGE

6. Motivation Assessment

Rate your motivation level for each boundary type (1=not motivated, 5=very motivated):

- Spatial boundaries: ____/5
- Temporal boundaries: ____/5
- Social boundaries: ____/5
- Mental-Emotional boundaries: ____/5

7. Support System

People who would support my boundary-setting efforts:

People who might resist my new boundaries:

How I'll handle resistance:

8. Commitment Level

On a scale of 1-10, how committed am I to improving my boundaries? ____/10

What would increase my commitment level?

Self-reflection worksheet

PART D. ACTION READINESS

9. Quick Wins

3 small boundary changes I could make this week:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

10. Biggest Challenge

The boundary issue that causes me the most stress:

Why this is difficult for me:

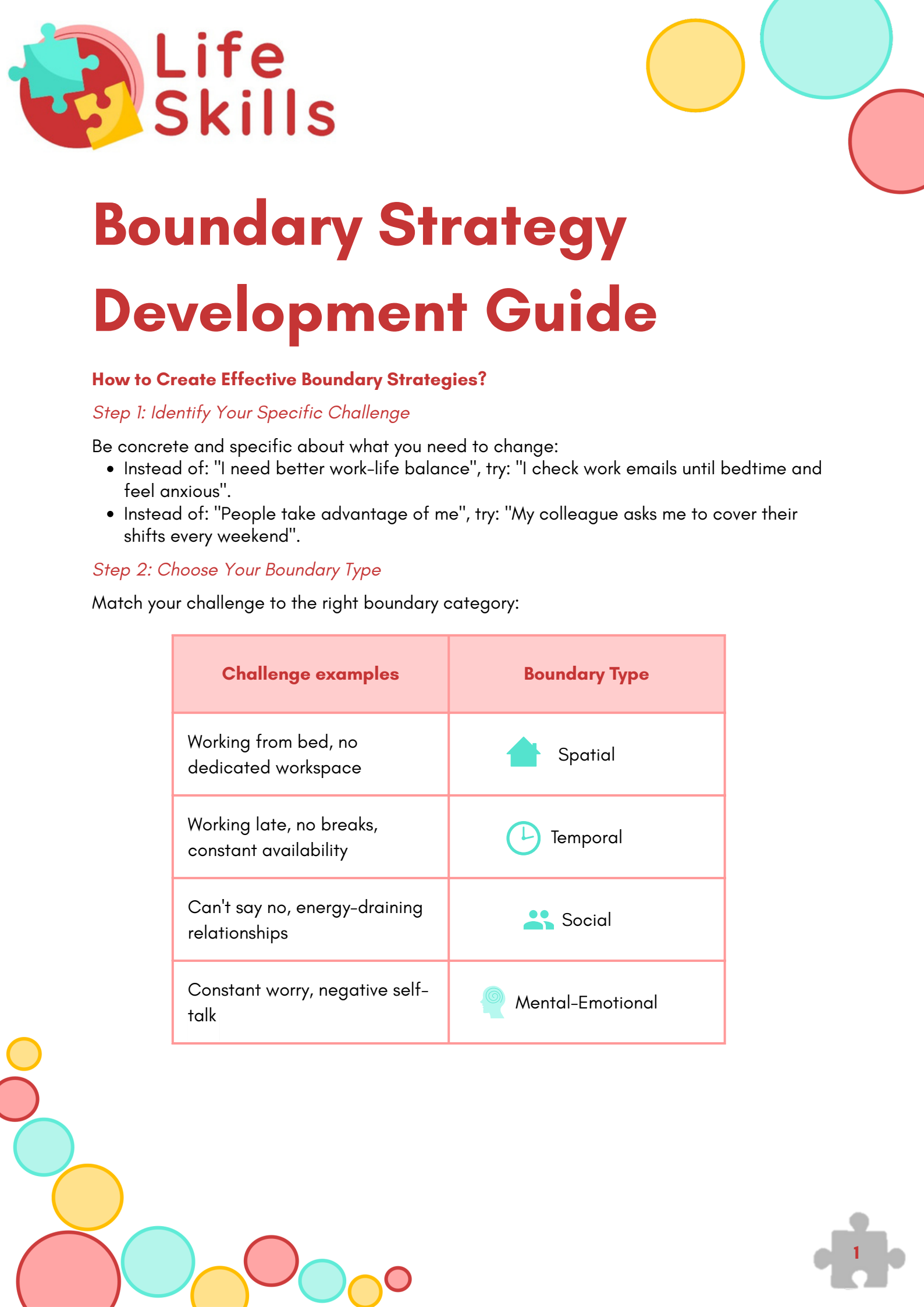
One small step I could take toward addressing this:

REFLECTION SUMMARY

Key Insight: What's the most important thing you learned about yourself?:

Priority Focus: Which type of boundary needs your attention first?:

Next Step: What specific action will you take after completing this reflection?:



Boundary Strategy Development Guide





How to Create Effective Boundary Strategies?

Step 1: Identify Your Specific Challenge

- Be concrete and specific about what you need to change:
- Instead of: "I need better work-life balance", try: "I check work emails until bedtime and feel anxious".
 - Instead of: "People take advantage of me", try: "My colleague asks me to cover their shifts every weekend".

Step 2: Choose Your Boundary Type

Match your challenge to the right boundary category:

Challenge examples	Boundary Type
Working from bed, no dedicated workspace	 Spatial
Working late, no breaks, constant availability	 Temporal
Can't say no, energy-draining relationships	 Social
Constant worry, negative self-talk	 Mental-Emotional

Boundary Strategy Development Guide

Step 3: Brainstorm Strategies

Use these prompts to generate ideas.

Spatial Strategy Prompts:

- What physical space could I create or change?
- How can I separate different activities spatially?
- What visual or physical cues could help me maintain boundaries?
- Where do I feel most/least comfortable, and why?

Temporal Strategy Prompts:

- What specific times need protection?
- How can I create transition rituals between activities?
- What schedule would support my energy and priorities?
- When am I most/least productive or happy?

Social Strategy Prompts:

- Which relationships need clearer boundaries?
- How can I spend more time with supportive people?
- What phrases can I use to say no kindly but firmly?
- Where can I find community and positive connections?

Mental-Emotional Strategy Prompts:

- What triggers my negative thinking patterns?
- How can I interrupt unproductive thoughts?
- What positive influences could I seek out?
- Where do I need more self-compassion?

Step 4: Make it SMART

Transform ideas into **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound strategies:

- Vague: "Be better with time"; SMART: "Check email only at 9am, 1pm, and 4pm on weekdays".
- Vague: "Avoid negative people"; SMART: "Limit phone calls with [specific person] to 20 minutes, once per week".

Boundary Strategy Development Guide

STRATEGY TEMPLATES

Template 1: The Boundary Statement

"I will [specific action] in order to [protect what value/need] by [when/how often]".

Examples:

- "I will turn off work notifications after 6pm in order to protect family time by starting tomorrow".
- "I will practice 5 minutes of deep breathing when I notice worry spirals in order to protect my mental peace by using a daily phone reminder".

Template 2: The If-Then Plan

"If [trigger situation], then I will [specific boundary action]". Examples:

- "If someone asks me to work late, then I will say 'Let me check my schedule and get back to you tomorrow'".
- If I start comparing myself to others on social media, then I will close the app and list three things I'm grateful for".

Template 3: The Environment Design

"I will change [physical/digital environment] so that [desired behavior] becomes easier".

Examples:

- "I will move my charging station to the kitchen so that going to bed without my phone becomes easier".
- "I will create a dedicated workspace so that separating work from home becomes easier".

Boundary Strategy Development Guide

COMMON STRATEGY CATEGORIES

Saying No Strategies

- The Pause: "Let me think about that and get back to you"
- The Alternative: "I can't do X, but I could do Y instead"
- The Broken Record: Repeat your no calmly and consistently
- The Compliment Sandwich: Appreciate the ask, decline, offer something else

Transition Strategies

- Physical Rituals: Change clothes, wash hands, take a walk
- Mental Rituals: Write down thoughts, do breathing exercises, set intentions
- Temporal Markers: Use timers, alarms, or scheduled breaks
- Symbolic Actions: Close laptop, lock office door, light a candle

Protection Strategies

- Buffer Zones: Schedule buffer time between activities
- Backup Plans: Have exit strategies for difficult situations
- Support Systems: Identify allies who can help maintain boundaries
- Recovery Time: Plan for rest and recharge after challenging situations

Strategy selection criteria

Ask Yourself:

- ✓ Is it specific enough? Can you picture exactly what you'll do?
- ✓ Is it realistic? Can you actually implement this given your circumstances?
- ✓ Is it sustainable? Could you maintain this strategy long-term?
- ✓ Does it align with your values? Does it protect what matters most to you?
- ✓ Is it under your control? Does it depend only on your actions, not others' behavior?

Troubleshooting Common Issues

- "I don't know where to start" → Start with the boundary violation that causes you the most stress → Choose the easiest boundary type for you to implement first
- "My strategies aren't working" → Make them smaller and more specific → Address environmental or systemic barriers → Get support from others
- "I feel guilty setting boundaries" → Remember: boundaries benefit everyone in the long run → Start with small, low-stakes boundaries to build confidence → Practice self-compassion - this is a skill that takes time
- "Others resist my boundaries" → Stay consistent - people test new boundaries → Communicate clearly and kindly but firmly → Focus on what you can control (your actions)

Boundary Strategy Development Guide

YOUR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

My specific boundary challenge:

Boundary type this addresses: ☐ Spatial ☐ Temporal ☐ Social ☐ Mental-Emotional

3 potential strategies:

1.

2.

3.

My chosen strategy (using SMART criteria):

Potential obstacles and solutions:

How I'll track progress:

Boundary Scenarios – Discussion Cards

Cut out these cards for group discussions, role-playing, or individual reflection.

SPATIAL DEMARCATION SCENARIOS

Scenario A1: The Home Office Dilemma

Sarah works from home in her studio apartment. Her bed doubles as her office chair, and work papers are scattered throughout her living space. She finds it hard to "turn off" work mode and often lies awake thinking about tomorrow's tasks.

Discussion Questions:

- What spatial boundaries could Sarah create?
- How might her current setup affect her sleep and relaxation?
- What creative solutions work in small spaces?

Scenario A2: The Family Workspace

Mike shares his home office with his teenager who does homework there. Zoom calls are frequently interrupted, and both feel their spaces are invaded. Tension is building over the shared territory.

Discussion Questions:

- How can shared spaces work for multiple people?
- What physical modifications could help?
- How might scheduling play a role?

TEMPORAL DEMARCATION SCENARIOS

Scenario B1: The Always-On Manager

Lisa checks emails at 6am and responds to messages until midnight. Her team has started expecting immediate responses at all hours. She feels exhausted but worries about appearing uncommitted if she's not constantly available.

Discussion Questions:

- What time boundaries could Lisa establish?
- How might constant availability affect her work quality?
- What communication strategies could she use with her team?

Scenario B2: The Over-scheduled Parent

Tom has no buffer time between activities. He rushes from work to kid pickup to soccer practice to grocery shopping. He's always stressed and never feels present in any situation.

Discussion Questions:

- Where could Tom build in transition time?
- What activities might be negotiable or combined?
- How might better time boundaries improve his relationships?

Boundary Scenarios - Discussion Cards

SOCIAL DEMARCATION SCENARIOS

Scenario C1: The People-Pleaser

Maya always says yes when friends ask for favors, even when she's overwhelmed. Last week she helped three different people move, covered extra shifts for coworkers, and babysat for her neighbor - all while behind on her own responsibilities.

Discussion Questions:

- What prevents Maya from saying no?
- How might her constant availability affect her relationships?
- What phrases could she use to set social boundaries?

Scenario C2: The Toxic Family Dynamic

James dreads family gatherings because his brother always makes critical comments about his career choices. These interactions leave him feeling drained and questioning himself for days afterward.

Discussion Questions:

- How can James protect his emotional energy?
- What strategies could he use during family events?
- How might he prepare mentally for difficult interactions?

MENTAL-EMOTIONAL DEMARCATION SCENARIOS

Scenario D1: The News Addict

Rachel compulsively checks news and social media throughout the day. She feels anxious and overwhelmed by constant negative information but can't seem to stop scrolling. Her sleep and mood have deteriorated.

Discussion Questions:

- What mental boundaries could Rachel create?
- How might information overload affect her well-being?
- What strategies could help her limit news consumption?

Scenario D2: The Perfectionist Spiral

David replays conversations in his head, analyzing what he "should have" said differently. He constantly worries about others' opinions and second-guesses his decisions. This mental chatter prevents him from enjoying present moments.

Discussion Questions:

- How can David create distance from his worry thoughts?
- What techniques might interrupt his overthinking patterns?
- How could he develop more self-compassion?

Boundary Scenarios - Discussion Cards

MIXED BOUNDARY SCENARIOS

Scenario E1: The Blended Challenge

Anna works remotely while caring for her elderly mother who lives with her. Work calls are interrupted by care-giving needs, personal time is nonexistent, and she feels guilty about both roles. She's exhausted and resentful.

Discussion Questions:

- What types of boundaries does Anna need?
- How might she address competing priorities?
- What support systems could help?

Scenario E2: The Technology Trap

Ben's smartphone buzzes with work emails, social media notifications, family group chats, news alerts, and gaming apps. He checks his phone over 100 times per day and feels anxious when it's not nearby. His relationships and focus have suffered.

Discussion Questions:

- How do multiple boundary types apply here?
- What digital boundaries could Ben create?
- How might he redesign his technology environment?

ROLE-PLAY SCENARIOS

Scenario F1: The Boundary Conversation

One person plays someone who regularly asks for last-minute favors. The other practices setting boundaries kindly but firmly.

Practice Phrases:

- "I can't help this time, but maybe next week would work"
- "I'd like to help, but I have other commitments"
- "Let me think about that and get back to you"

Scenario F2: The Workplace Boundary

One person plays a colleague who frequently interrupts. The other practices maintaining work boundaries while staying professional.

Practice Phrases:

- "I'm focused on a deadline right now. Can we schedule 15 minutes later?"
- "I want to give this my full attention. When would be a good time to talk?"
- "I'm not available for extra projects this month, but check with me in [timeframe]"

Boundary Scenarios – Discussion Cards

DISCUSSION PROMPTS FOR GROUPS

For Any Scenario:

1. What boundary types are involved? (Spatial, Temporal, Social, Mental-Emotional)
2. What might be the underlying values or needs being violated?
3. What are the costs of maintaining the current situation?
4. What are the potential benefits of setting boundaries?
5. What obstacles might prevent boundary setting?
6. What support or resources might help?

Progressive Questions:

- Level 1: What do you notice about this situation?
- Level 2: What would you advise this person to do?
- Level 3: How does this relate to your own experiences?
- Level 4: What boundary strategies could work in similar situations?

TRAINER NOTES

Using These Scenarios:

- Individual Reflection: Have participants choose scenarios that resonate with their experiences
- Small Group Discussion: Assign different scenarios to different groups, then share insights
- Role-Playing: Use scenarios F1 and F2 for practicing boundary conversations
- Case Study Analysis: Work through scenarios systematically using the discussion questions

Facilitation Tips:

- Encourage participants to share only what they're comfortable with
- Validate that boundary setting can be challenging and emotional
- Focus on practical strategies rather than just identifying problems
- Connect scenarios back to the four boundary types
- Use scenarios as bridges to participants' real-life situations