Understanding Boundaries

One important way to take care of yourself is to set strong and healthy boundaries around yourself and your life. A Boundary is like an invisible line around you. It is what separates you from other people. It is the line between what you are comfortable with and what you are uncomfortable with, what is acceptable to you and what is unacceptable to you. Boundaries help protect not only our physical safety, but also our emotional well-being.

Healthy boundaries are flexible. For example, you might open up your boundaries to let people you trust closer to you - you might share more information with them and feel more comfortable being physically close to them. But with people you don't know as well or people you distrust, you will probably keep your boundaries closed more tightly by not getting too personal.

DIFFERENT BOUNDARIES WITH DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS

In **circle 1** around "you", write the names of the people who are closest to you, and who you open up your boundaries the most for. In **circle 2**, write the names of a few people who you have good relationships with but are not as close as the people in the inner circle. In **circle 3**, mention names of people who you have relationships with that are not very personal. Is there anyone who has given you good reason not to trust them - who you feel you have to protect yourself from? Write these names on the **outside of the solid line**, which indicates that your boundaries are very firm with them.

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YOU

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