

Boundaries in Family Systems

Assess your family's boundary patterns — and make intentional adjustments toward clear, flexible, healthy limits.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Clinician: _____

About family boundaries: Healthy family systems have clear but flexible boundaries — between individuals, between generations, and between the family and the outside world. Rigid boundaries lead to isolation; diffuse boundaries lead to enmeshment. This worksheet helps you assess and adjust boundaries within your family system.

TYPES OF FAMILY BOUNDARIES

Enmeshed (too diffuse)

Little privacy between family members. Everyone knows everyone's business. Individual needs are subsumed by family needs. Difficulty separating one person's feelings from another's.

Healthy (clear & flexible)

Privacy respected. Individuals have autonomy. Connection maintained without merging. Generational hierarchy clear but not rigid. Appropriate information sharing.

Disengaged (too rigid)

Little emotional connection or involvement. Members feel isolated. Problems not shared. Minimal support or warmth. Independence valued to exclusion of connection.

ASSESSING OUR FAMILY BOUNDARIES

Where our family falls on the enmeshment–disengagement spectrum (and why):

Boundaries that are unclear or causing problems in our family right now:

Generational boundary issues (e.g. children in adult roles, parents in peer roles):

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Boundaries with extended family that need to be addressed:

One boundary change that would most improve our family functioning:
