**Lesson 7: Strengthening ME Health – Boundaries**

**Overview:** Students will understand boundaries, define their personal boundaries that impact mental and emotional (ME) health, and explain why they are important to mental and emotional (ME) health. Students apply Stop, Think, Choose and assertive communication to make healthy choices and maintain their boundaries.

National Health Education Standards

**Standard 1:** Students comprehend functional health knowledge to enhance health.

**Standard 3:** Students demonstrate health literacy by accessing valid and reliable health information, products, and services to enhance health.

Healthy Behavior Outcomes (HBOs):

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| --- |
| Engage in activities that are mentally and emotionally healthy. |
| Use self-control and impulse-control strategies to promote health. |

**Lesson Objectives –** Students will be able to:

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| --- | --- |
| **MEH HBO** | **Assessments** |
| 1. Define boundaries and the roles boundaries play in mental and emotional health. | Attachment 7.1 – Boundaries that Support ME Health |
| 1. Evaluate a situation to determine if the action is outside of their boundaries for ME health. | Attachment 7.1 – Boundaries that Support ME Health |
| 1. Identify trusted adults who can support and maintain boundaries for ME health. | Attachment 7.1 – Boundaries that Support ME Health |
| 1. Use assertive communication to establish or maintain boundaries for ME health. | Attachment 7.2 – Staying in Bounds |

Lesson Prerequisites or Assumptions:

* Lesson 8 from the HELPs Substance Use Prevention lessons is helpful to introduce or reinforce assertive communication and refusal skills.

Introduction:

* Instructor should prompt students by saying or displaying this prompt. “Imagine someone you were just starting to be friends with took your phone and started looking at your private text messages. Choose a feeling on the Feelings Index (Attachment 7.1) to describe how you would feel.
* Complete the sentence, “I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Have students share responses and highlight if the responses are similar or different. (Do not force anyone to share.) Let the students know that we will be revisiting this prompt later in the lesson.

Teaching Steps:

Activity 1: What is a boundary?

* What is a boundary?
  + A line that marks the limit of an area, subject, or activity
  + When we consider our health, it is how you will treat yourself and others, as well as how you want to be treated.
* Can you give me an example of a boundary (road, field boundaries in sports, fence around a yard, walls in a room, etc.)? Why do we have boundaries?
  + It’s a limit for what’s acceptable. In tennis, it is whether the ball is in or out of bounds. When you’re driving, it’s the path that you can drive safely.
  + Boundaries help us feel safe and healthy. Setting boundaries is key to protecting our health.
  + Boundaries can be physical, verbal, and emotional/psychological. Emotional boundaries include thoughts and feelings and how they are expressed. Verbal boundaries are how people speak with you or how you speak, which includes name calling, bullying, yelling, use of harmful/hurtful words, and belittling or criticizing others.
  + Sometimes we have boundaries set for us by others such as parents, laws, and school rules; other times we have to set our own boundaries so that we can make healthy and safe choices. Boundaries change throughout our lives.
  + Our rule: Everyone has the right to decide their boundaries. Each person can decide what is OK and not OK.
* Today’s lesson is focused on setting healthy boundaries for ME health; learning how to stand up for ourselves when necessary; and recognizing and honoring the boundaries and feelings of others.
  + Can you think about how setting boundaries would impact our mental health? It might be important to set boundaries for using my phone or technology, when I go to sleep and wake up, or rules about behavior.
* What might be some aspects of our life that impact ME health that we need to set personal boundaries for?
  + Our health – substance use, our body (e.g., wearing a bike helmet), eating, etc.
  + Activities – video games; social media; using my phone to text or call; TV; curfew.
* Let’s practice recognizing boundaries (Attachment 7.1):
  + Sarah keeps a private diary that she does not let anyone read. Sarah’s friend Sam sees her diary in her room, picks it up, and starts reading it.
* Why would boundaries be important? Why would they be important to mental health?
* Setting boundaries provides protection by setting expectations for what is acceptable. It sets clear expectations and provides guidance to make healthy decisions. For example, if I have a boundary about when I do my homework or sleep, I’ll go to bed and feel rested the next day.
* Setting boundaries can improve our health by:
  + Reducing stress
  + Boosting self-esteem
  + Improving relationships with others
  + Protecting your health by setting expectations for healthy behaviors
* We have our own boundaries, but everyone else does, too. We should respect and honor those boundaries.
* Remember:
  + Boundaries are self-created.
  + Boundaries can be changed as you grow.
  + Boundaries need to be respected.
  + Everyone has the right to decide their boundaries and have their boundaries respected.
* Complete Attachment 7.2, Part II to generate a list of your boundaries. We’ll also recognize boundaries for using social media and technology in Lesson 7 and practice setting boundaries to enhance sleep in Lesson 8.

Activity 2: Setting Boundaries – Be Assertive (Attachment 7.2)

* Refer back to a scenario from Attachment 7.1. What is the boundary? Was it crossed? How will someone feel if a boundary is crossed?
  + When someone’s boundaries are crossed without permission, it can make them feel uneasy, embarrassed, humiliated, or hurt.
* Everyone has boundaries. It’s important to communicate those boundaries if you feel someone is going to cross your boundaries. You can use assertive communication to share your boundary (Teachers see Substance Use Prevention – Lesson 8 for additional practice.)
* Assertiveness includes what you say and how you say it.
  + What will you say?
    1. Say the word NO.
    2. Say it in a firm tone. Speak clearly, calmly, confidently, and concisely (the 4 C’s), but no arguing.
    3. Repeat if necessary. You may need to say it more than once.
    4. Suggest an alternative.
    5. Use actions and body language to support your NO message.
* How will you say it?
  + Stand tall and head up.
  + Be aware of your gestures.
  + Use a confident tone of voice.
  + Be direct and speak at a volume they can hear, but not yelling.
  + Be clear, calm, and steady.
* Complete Attachment 7.2 Staying in bounds
  + \*If someone is disrespecting you or your boundaries, seek the help and support of a trusted adult.
  + \*Use HELPs Substance Use Prevention Lessons 7 and 8 to develop assertiveness and refusal skills.

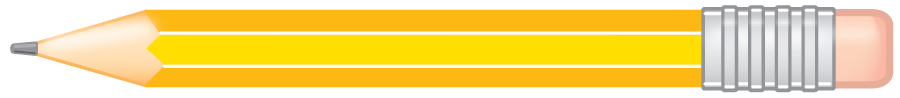
Closure

* What are boundaries?
* Why are boundaries important to your mental and emotional health?
* Use \_\_\_\_\_ communication to set and stay within your boundaries. If needed, ask a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ adult for help.
* Why are boundaries important to ME health? What tools can you use to set boundaries, maintain them, or respect someone else’s boundaries?

Attachment 7.1: Feelings Index

A screenshot of a computer game

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Attachment 7.2: Boundaries That Support ME Health

Part I. Boundaries

1. What is a boundary?
2. Why is it important to your health to set boundaries?

**Part II. Scenarios. In or Out of Bounds?**

*Directions: Read the scenario and decide if the action is inside or outside of the person’s boundaries.*

**Scenario 1:** Sarah keeps a private diary that she does not let anyone read. Sarah’s friend Sam sees her diary in her room, picks it up, and starts reading it.

**In Out**

**Scenario 2:** Tia just got a new video game system. Tia’s parents said it can only be played after homework is finished and before 9 p.m. Tia decides to play video games first before finishing today’s homework.

**In Out**

**Scenario 3:** Shae was supposed to be home by 6 p.m. for dinner. They were at a friend’s house and realized it was 5:45 p.m., so they headed home.

**In Out**

**Part III.** List your boundaries that support ME (Mental and Emotional) Health

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sleep** | **Technology Use** | **Another Boundary** | **Another Boundary** |
|  |  |  |  |

Who can help you set or maintain a boundary?

**Attachment 7.2: Staying in Bounds – Assertive Communication for ME Health and Asking for Help for ME**

*Directions: Read the scenario, then determine if the action would be inside or outside of your boundaries. If the answer is outside of your boundaries, then write an assertive message.*

**Scenario 1:** Tee said, “Let’s stay up all night and play video games online.”

**Boundary: In or Out**

What would you say to stay in bounds?

**Scenario 2:** Quinn wants you to create a social media profile to share all the gossip from your school.

**Boundary: In or Out**

What would you say to stay in bounds?

List three nonverbal communication cues to be sure your message in clearly communicated.

**A blue and yellow magnifying glass with a eye symbol

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