



Boundaries for Everyday Life

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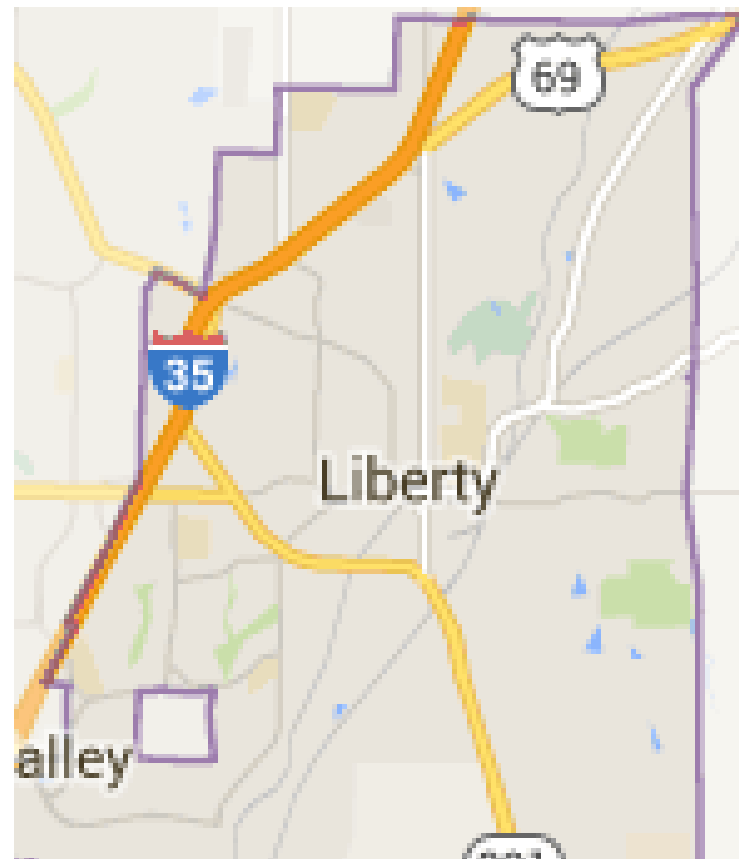
Mental Health Association
of America of the Heartland

Pleasant Valley Baptist Church
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“Good fences make good
neighbors.” Robert Frost

Geographic Boundaries



Sports Field Boundaries




Other Boundaries

- Laws (e.g., traffic)
- Communities (e.g., unspoken dress codes)
- Natural law

Personal Boundaries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nENHkYV-iLI>



Having healthy personal
boundaries is a lifestyle,
not a quick fix.



Healthy = flourishing,
beneficial for self and others

Personal Boundaries

- Ownership
Identify who owns it
- Control
Know who controls it
- Responsibility
Know who's responsible for it

Personal Boundaries Defined

“Simply put, a boundary is a limit or space between you and the other person; a clear place where you begin and the other person ends. Think of it as a fence in your backyard. You are the gate keeper and get to decide who you let in and who you keep out, who you let into the whole back yard, or who you let just inside the gate.”

“Boundaries defined” (2015)

<https://www.ipfw.edu/affiliates/assistance/selfhelp/relationship-settingboundaries.html>

Personal Boundaries

- Boundaries define us
- Personal space
- Keep good in; keep bad out
- Identify own responsibilities
- Give us control over our lives

Kinds of Boundaries

- Physical: personal space and touch
- Mental: thoughts and opinions
- Psychological: emotions and self-esteem
- Social: customs of society
- Spiritual: beliefs and intuition

In-bound and Out-bound Boundaries

- In-bound: Protection
- Out-bound: Containment

Benefits of Setting and Maintaining Boundaries

- Improve sense of security, stability, predictability, and order
- Creates more relaxed, nonjudgmental atmosphere

Personal Boundaries Protect Us

- Love: connect and trust
- Emotions: Own personal feelings and not be controlled by others' feelings
- Values: Own life reflects deepest caring
- Behaviors: Control over personal actions
- Attitudes: Stances & opinions about yourself and others

Personal Boundaries

Honest \neq Open

Lack of Boundaries

- Loss of self: identity and lifestyle
- Spend time with wrong people
- Uncomfortable behaviors
- Avoiding others; isolating
- Doing too much
- Freedom without responsibility: “having your cake and eating it too”
- Control others with manipulation, guilt, domination, intimidation
- Inability to say “no”

Lack of Boundaries

- Enmeshed relationships:
 - No autonomy or personal boundaries
 - Depend on others to feel whole, happy, and loved
 - Controlling behavior, distrust, perfectionism, unable to experience or identify feelings, intimacy problems, care-taking behavior, hyper vigilance, denial, somatizing stress
 - Often addictive behaviors

Establishing Boundaries

- Develop the skill: watch others, trial & error
- Know your emotional, physical, mental, spiritual limits
- HALT: hungry, angry, lonely, tired
- Be aware of feelings: uncomfortable feeling may indicate broach of boundary
- Communicate clearly and assertively
- Seek support
- Identify personal values
- Negotiate communal values

Maintaining Boundaries

- Words
- Body language (e.g., posturing, hand signals, facial expressions)
- Behavior (e.g., stepping forward, moving back, leaving the area)

Words

- No
- I disagree
- I will not
- I choose not to
- Stop that
- It hurts
- It's wrong
- That's bad
- I don't like it when you touch me there

Paralyzing Causes

- Fear of hurting someone's feelings
- Fear of being abandoned or separate
- Desire to be totally dependent on another
- Fear of someone's anger
- Fear of punishment
- Fear of being shamed
- Fear of being perceived as bad or selfish

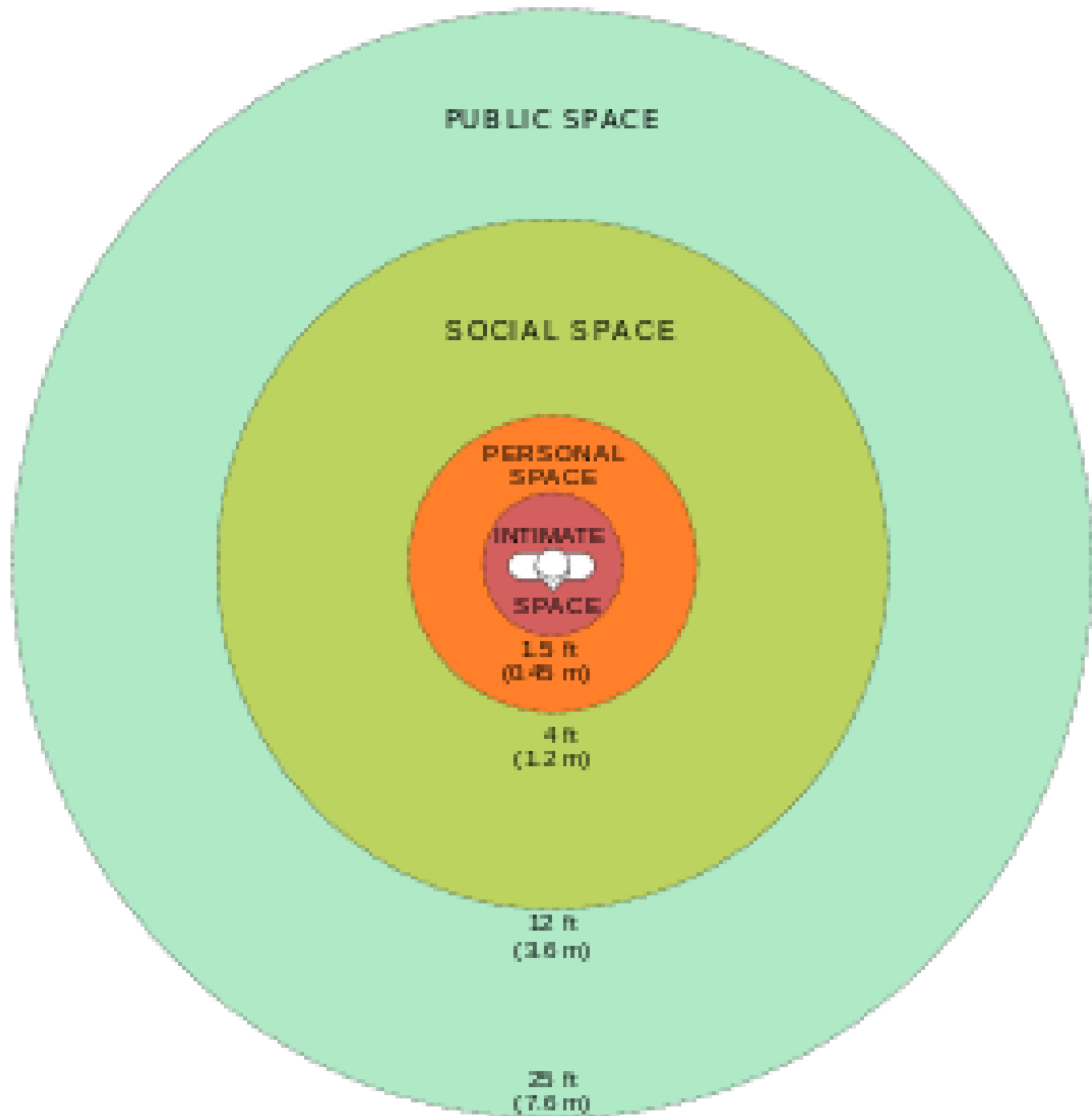
Comfort Zone

- Space where one experiences low anxiety and stress



Personal Space

Edward T. Hall's personal reaction bubbles



PUBLIC SPACE

SOCIAL SPACE

PERSONAL SPACE

INTIMATE SPACE

1.5 ft
(0.45 m)

4 ft
(1.2 m)

12 ft
(3.6 m)

25 ft
(7.6 m)

Determinants of Personal Space

- Social status
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Country of origin
- Geographic region
- Environmental conditions (e.g., public transport, public events)

Other Personal Boundaries

- Personal distance: distance between two or more individuals
- Social distance: communication distance
- Critical distance: attack boundary
- Escape distance: move away from disturbing sound or event
- Alert distance: become more conscious of surroundings
- Flight distance: run boundary

(Heini Heddiger, Swiss zoologist)

Relationships

Dilemma: set a boundary and risk losing a relationship

Failing to set limits keeps us a prisoner of others' wishes

Relationship Boundaries

- Know and respect each other's
 - Goals
 - Fears
 - Limits
 - Wants



Relationship Boundaries (con't)

Know and respect each other's
boundaries in order **to feel safe**

Home Boundaries

Everybody needs their own space, no matter how big it is

- Man-cave
- Child's room
- Craft room
- Home office

Digital Boundaries

- Identify personal boundaries
- Communicate to others
- Know and respect boundaries so can feel safe

Digital Boundaries (con't)

- Negotiate digital communication for relationship
 - Use each other's devices
 - Share an e-mail
 - OK to read the other's e-mail?
 - Call at work; outside of certain hours
 - Indicate status on Facebook
 - Tweet activities
 - OK to friend other's friends?

Digital Boundaries (con't)

- Negotiate digital communication for relationship
 - Share passwords?
 - Share photos?

Resources

Barrett Values Center – Personal Values
Assessment:

<http://www.valuescentre.com/pva/>

Medlineplus.gov

Books, sound recordings, YouTube
videos and other materials by Dr.
John Townsend and Dr. Henry
Cloud



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