

What are Boundaries & How to Support Them

A Direct Support Professional's (DSPs) **primary purpose** is to assist people who need support to lead self-directed lives and participate fully in our communities. This is especially important when considering that the entire landscape of a person's life can change through ethical and intentional direct support services.

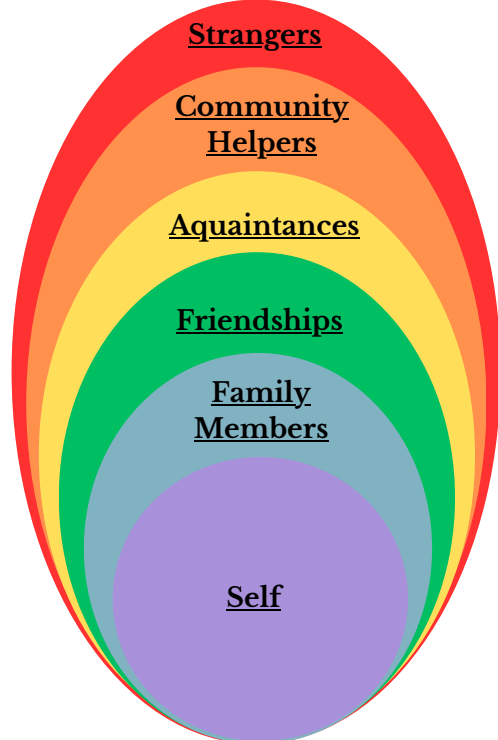
Visuals help us all identify and appropriately interact with a variety of "safe" strangers. Although it is very easy to get the lines crossed, it's imperative that in a professional environment we conduct ourselves as professionals. Friendships are important, professional support is crucial, and community connections are key. Relationships are all different and should be treated as such. **Understanding boundaries are an important part of daily living** for all of us here at TVS, and also for the community at large. We encourage healthy friendships and promote natural supports within the community. All the while educating our participants as to what those different boundaries should look like and how they compare. There is a difference between the relationships with coworkers & family members.

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Whatever the speed of our feet or the power of our arms, each of us is capable of the highest virtues. Intelligence does not limit love, nor does wealth produce friendship. Every person, regardless of whatever different abilities they may have, can contribute, can be a source of joy, and can beam with pride and love.
Eunice Kennedy Shriver
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RELATIONSHIPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
 Being able to differentiate between strangers, friends, family, and acquaintances is taught to most everyone at a young age. People in our community have different roles based on how we have them categorized:

- **stranger**
- **community helper**
- **acquaintance**
- **friend**
- **family**
- **self**

It is even more complex than this; we all have different levels of friends & family.



Relationships in the Real World

Boundaries are not exclusive to the role of the DSP but to all people. When given the opportunity, we **empower people** by encouraging them to branch out and get to know new people and to make friends. We also remind individuals of the boundaries that they should maintain for their safety and the safety of the other person(s) as well. We use examples of what friendships look like and what family member relationships look like.

In general, people aren't crossing boundaries on purpose or to be harmful in any way. We likely don't know that what we are doing isn't ok and the negative implications it can have for the individual. **Our teams try to explain boundaries in such a way that is real life.** For example, you shouldn't just go up and hug a stranger and tell them the most personal details of your life.

Compiled by Brooke Wilson, INTERACT Supervisor
 For more information please visit: www.dimagine.com and *You Just Don't Do That!* "Drawing the Line Between Direct Support Staff and People with Disabilities by Stephanie Ioannou via Vita Community Living Services