Walls of Boundaries - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about walls of boundaries while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Riley wants privacy around messages while remaining connected to friends.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore walls of boundaries using an ordinary or fictional example? We can adapt it, observe, or stop." Ask what the person wants from the conversation.

Elicit before teaching

Ask: "How does this show up, if at all, in your own words?" Offer this idea tentatively: Walls can represent chosen limits rather than total isolation. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Identify one useful boundary, one flexible opening, and a situation where safety needs outside support. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Riley wants privacy around messages while remaining connected to friends.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: What should this boundary protect, and how can it remain realistic? Avoid assigning motives or interpreting silence as agreement.

Respond to a mismatch

If the person rejects the frame, say: "Thank you for correcting it. What would be more useful?" Return to their language or choose a different approach.

Close with agency

Ask which observation, question, or support request the person wants to keep. Confirm a manageable ending and appropriate follow-up; do not turn a tentative possibility into a homework obligation.

Reflection

What would tell me to adapt, stop, or seek supervision?

Scope and adaptation

An original DBT-informed house metaphor for educational reflection, not an official standardized DBT assessment, diagnostic drawing test, or comprehensive DBT. The maker defines meanings. Offer another metaphor if housing is sensitive, and allow omissions or fiction. Do not interpret rooms, colors, or omissions as evidence of pathology or safety.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training: Fundamentals. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/recovery/resources/DBH-A04-3