

BONDS & BOXES

BOUNDARY SKILL BUILDING WITH SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

OVW Rural NGO
January 2025

Resource
Sharing
Project



THE RESOURCE SHARING PROJECT

The RSP is a collaborative project between Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault & North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault

- Technical Assistance to State/Territorial Coalitions
- Sexual Assault Service Program (SASP) Administrator Technical Assistance
- Housing & Transitional Housing Program
- **Rural Training and TA**
 - The Rural Training & TA Project seeks to enhance the capacity of rural dual/multi-service advocacy agencies to provide sexual assault services.



RSP Rural- Boundary Skill Building with SV Survivors

ACTIVITY!:

COUNTING

Activity description (to be removed once approved):

Participants will take turns counting as high as possible (as a group aloud) without coordinating. Every time two people say the same number or mess up, they will have to start over.

The point of the activity is for them to understand that it's hard to connect and then set boundaries without communication.





CONTEXT AND GROUNDING

What is healing? Why is it important to sexual violence services? How does that relate to boundary setting?

HOW DOES SEXUAL VIOLENCE IMPACT RURAL COMMUNITIES?

“That doesn’t happen here.”

- Relationships with those who did the harm and were harmed
- The balance between anonymity & privacy and secrecy & silencing may be difficult

“Your wait time is...”

- Resources are less funded, farther apart, and there are less options to choose from
- Resources may not exist
- Stigma around accessing those resources
- Intended fixes don’t center rural communities

NEEDS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Be believed

Emotional Support

Access to Healing and Safety

HEALING:

caring for the many parts of oneself that have been interrupted by trauma: physical, emotional, social, mental, spiritual, and more.



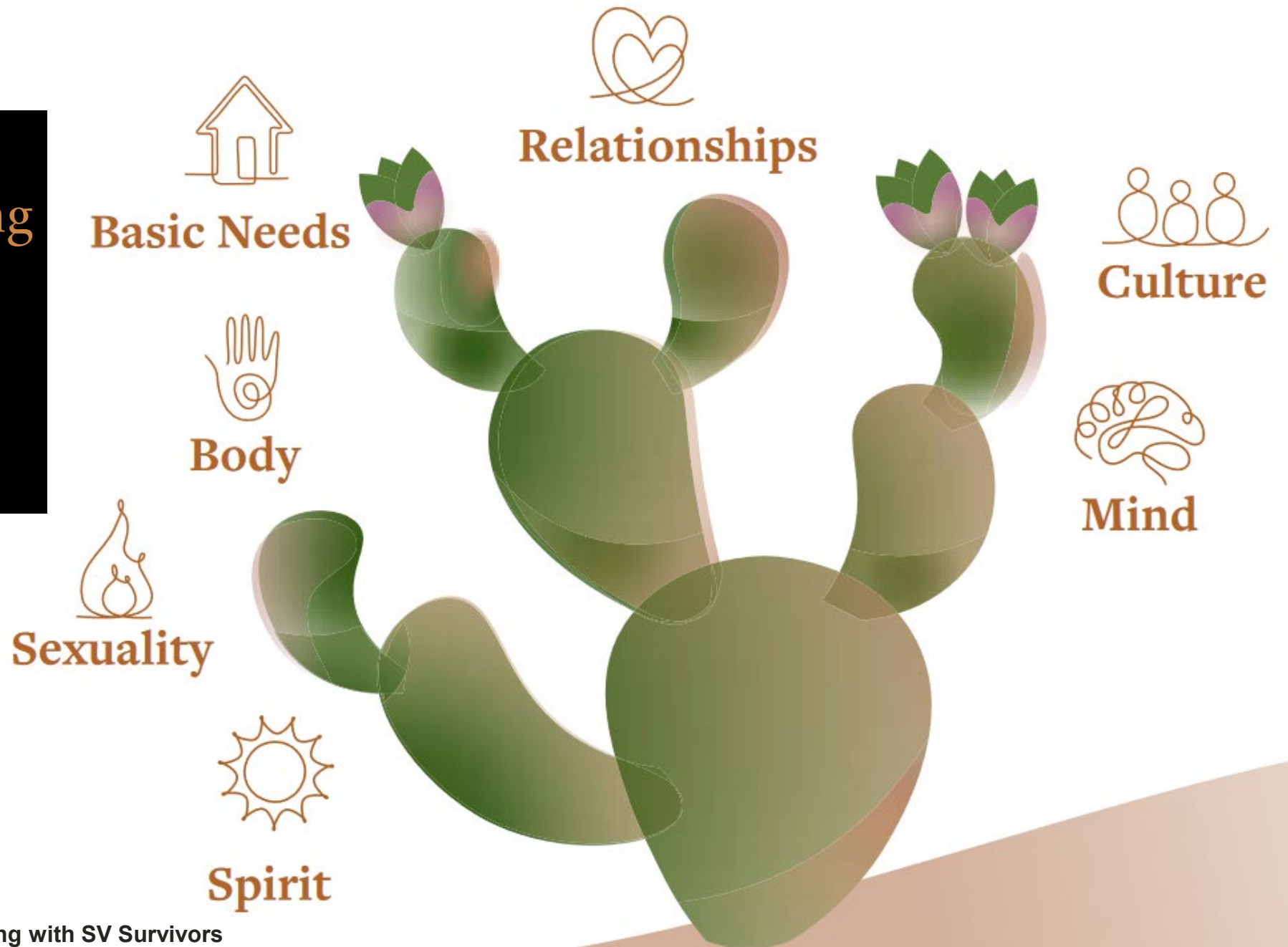


IN ADVOCACY SERVICES, SURVIVORS NEED

- Access healing services even long after they experienced sexual violence
- Access healing services across the lifespan (children, youth, adults, elder adults)
- Define justice and accountability in a way that is healing for them
- Access healing holistically, in multiple parts of their life

Rural Advocacy Through a Healing Lens

Resource Sharing Project





WHEN ADVOCACY IS HEALING CENTERED ADVOCACY

- Meets the survivors where they are and addresses each sphere of their life
- Is founded upon the principles of trauma-informed care



WHEN ADVOCACY IS HEALING CENTERED ADVOCACY #2

- Asks to consider the holistic needs of the survivor, their loved ones, and their communities
- Can still benefit survivors who want to interact with systems
- Is beneficial to the mental health of advocates

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

4 FRAMES + **5 SKILLS** =

Hope
Worth
Security
Connection

Empathetic and
Active Listening
Choice Points
Safety Planning
Grounding
Boundary Setting

**HEALING
CENTERED
SERVICES**





SHARPENING OUR BOUNDARY SKILLS

**What is a skill that inspires WORTH? How
can we remind survivors they are WORTHY
through advocacy?**



ADVOCATES CAN PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT UTILIZING THE FOLLOWING SKILLS

Empathetic and Active Listening

Choice Points

Safety Planning

Grounding

Boundary Setting


SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION:

- What are boundaries?
- How do they relate to sexual violence?

BOUNDARY SETTING

Limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships





**“BOUNDARIES ARE THE
DISTANCE THAT I CAN
LOVE YOU AND ME
RESPECTFULLY.”**

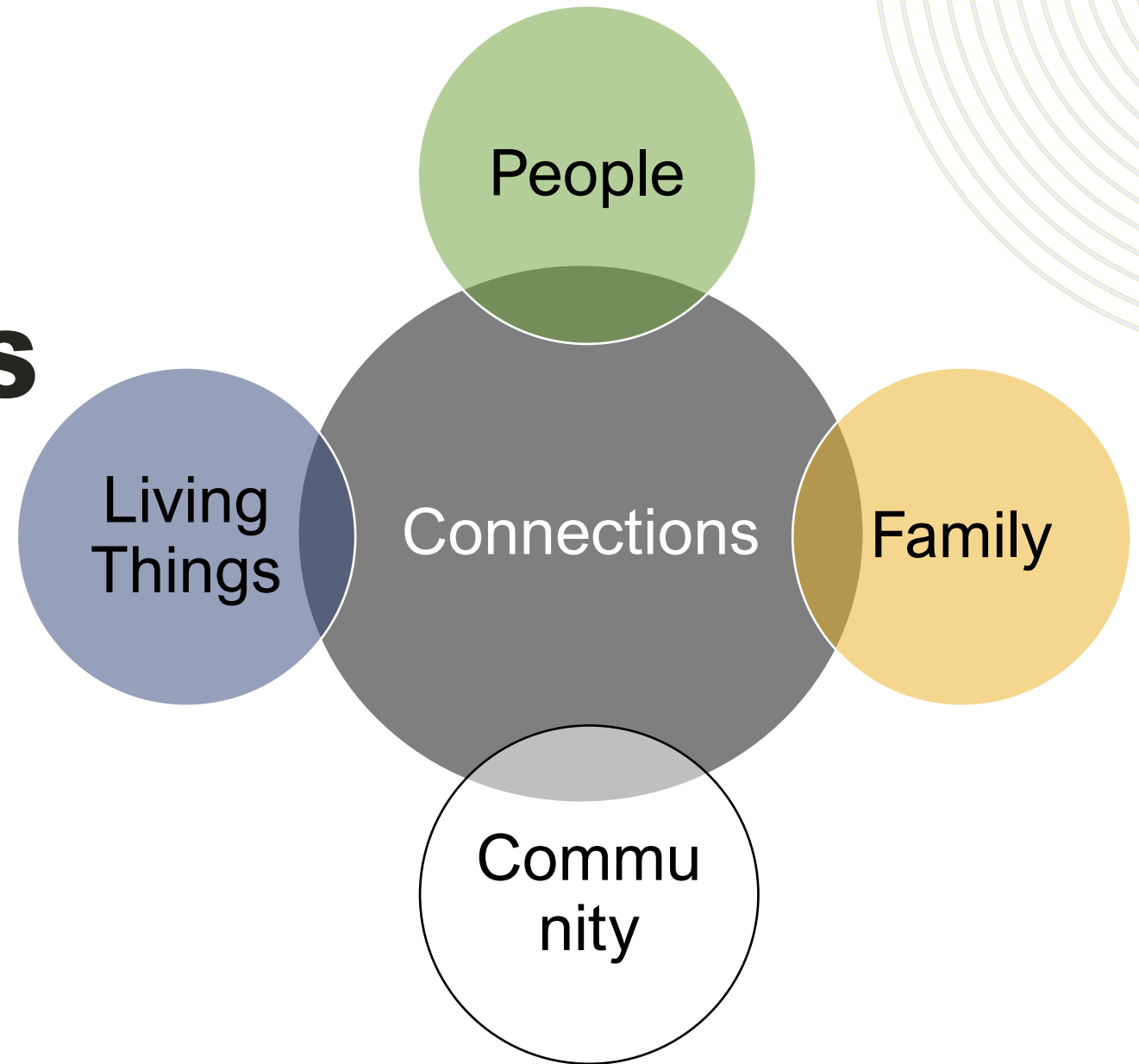
Prentis Hemphill



BOUNDARIES ENHANCE CONNECTIONS

- Having relationships is essential to healing in the lives of sexual violence survivors
- Boundaries allow survivors to build, maintain, and end relationships

TYPES OF CONNECTIONS



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION:

- Why might a survivor of sexual violence struggle with boundaries?
- Who may survivors struggle to set boundaries with?

ACTIVITY!:

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY

Activity description (to be removed once approved):

Participants will try to build a block structure with the instructions that they cannot talk during the activity.

The point of the activity is for them to understand that it's hard to know others' boundaries and needs without communication and that when there are relationships, it's easier to achieve objectives, understand others' boundaries, and ultimately meet their goals.



BR EPISODE #4: HOW DOES CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMPACT RELATIONSHIP BUILDING?



BOUNDARIES CAN BE DIFFICULT

People who experience sexual violence have often violated

People who experience sexual violence may have trouble identifying, setting, and maintaining their personal boundaries

People don't know if they consented, so they don't know if the boundary was broken

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Who might survivors
need to set boundaries
with in their lives?



LETS PRACTICE!

**What can we do to help survivors with
boundaries?**



PRACTICING BOUNDARIES: HEALING PRACTICES FOR CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE





REMINDE SURVIVORS

- Boundaries work best when there is a connection
- Boundaries should be recognized and respected mutually
- Having boundaries will not always stop trauma from happening, but it can help them:
 - Know what their limits are
 - Have others recognize and respect
 - Enforce and change the for the future



WHEN SETTING BOUNDARIES

Remember

that they deserve to feel safe and can make choices for themselves

Think

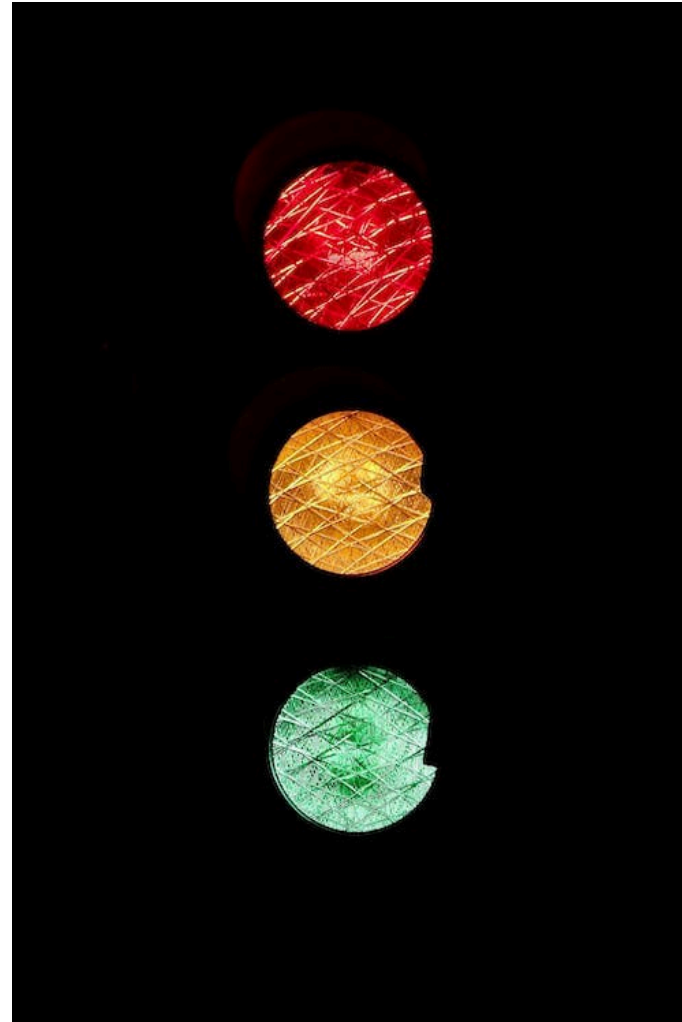
about how to set boundaries in a consistent and clear way

Strategize

around events and times that they may feel pressure to be around those people

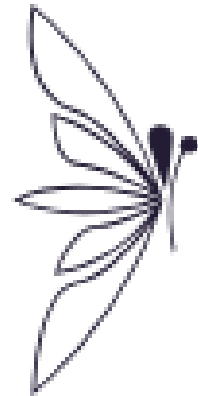
BOUNDARIES: LET'S MOVE

“Setting boundaries be hard. What does that feel like in your body to say no?”



BOUNDARIES: LET'S REFLECT

**WEBINAR Activity #1:
Exploring Personal
Boundaries**



Women's Advocates

BOUNDARIES: LET'S SAY IT

SAYING NO

“I don't feel comfortable sharing that with you.”

“I'm not comfortable with this.”

“Please don't do that.”

“NO”

BOUNDARIES: LET'S SAY IT

REQUESTING SUPPORT

“This person has hurt me in the past without taking accountability for what they’ve done.”

“I wish you would support me on this.”

“I am not in space to talk about that right now.”

“Right now, I don’t need your advice or opinions. I just need someone to listen to what I have to share.”

BOUNDARIES: LET'S SAY IT

RE-ENFORCEMENT

“This is something I need to do for my healing. You don’t have to agree, but I ask that you respect my choice.”

“This is a boundary for me that I’ve asked you to respect. I’m not going to change my mind.”

“I’m going to leave if you *(state action or behavior)*.”

BOUNDARIES: LET'S SAY IT

ASKING THEM TO LISTEN

“I would like you to understand how your actions impacted me.”

“I want you to believe what I’m telling you now.”

“I understand this impacted you too, but right now, we’re discussing my feelings and what I need.”

BOUNDARIES: LET'S SAY IT

ASKING FOR WHAT YOU NEED

“It’s difficult to be around you because (reason). This was also hard to share with you, so please respect my feelings.”

“Please give me space right now. I will reach out to you when I’m ready to talk.”

“You can support me by...”

BOUNDARIES: LET'S DIVE DEEPER!

UNPACKING THE GREY AREA: FORCE, FRAUD, Coercion, and Sexual Violence Handout



LIVE ON THE RSP WEBSITE!

ADVOCATES CAN

- Reinforce survivor's boundaries- “It sounds like you were able to stick to that boundary. How do you feel?”
- Help them plan on how to respond when someone violates their boundaries- “What boundaries do you want to set the next time your friends still want you to go out and drink? What do you want to do if they keep asking you about going?”



ADVOCATES CAN

Remind them that sexual violence is the boundary violation, not setting the boundary.

“You set a boundary, and they didn’t respect that. That’s on them.”





WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP SURVIVORS SET BOUNDARIES WITH US?

- Proactively acknowledge your power as an advocate, as someone who has knowledge and access to resources they might not
- Model sharing your boundaries without being prompted
- Leave space for people to agree or disagree
- Encourage survivors to set boundaries with you and tell you when they disagree

BOUNDARY WORK IS NOT ALWAYS EASY, BUT IT IS ALWAYS WORTH IT



Illustration created by Sonia Pulido

**QUESTIONS?
THANK YOU!**



**LASHAE LOPEZ (SHE/HER)
RURAL TA COORDINATOR
LASHAE@IOWACASA.ORG
515-401-8984**

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