

# Creating a Sexual Boundary Plan

## Objective

To identify goals and create a sexual boundary plan to help you overcome sexual addiction.

## What to Know

Sexual sobriety does not involve total and permanent sexual abstinence. Instead, sex addicts create a personalized sexual sobriety plan that looks different depending on unique life circumstances and goals to achieve a non-compulsive, non-secretive, non-shaming sexual life.

In this exercise, you will create a highly individualized Sexual Boundary Plan with inner, middle, and outer boundaries that provide you with clear guidance for moving forward in your recovery.

## What to Do

First, identify your goals for recovery. Here are a few goals that sex addicts commonly choose. Check off any that you would like to include in your plan.

- I will no longer cheat on or keep secrets from my spouse.
- I want to date and establish connections instead of just getting off.
- I will no longer lose myself in pornography and hookup apps, forgetting about or ignoring other parts of my life.
- I don't want to get reprimanded, fired, approached by security, or arrested for my sexual behavior.
- I want an intimate, honest, caring, and emotionally engaged romantic relationship.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Next, you will identify your sexual boundaries, which support your goals for recovery.

**The Inner Boundary.** This boundary includes non-sober, damaging, and troublesome behaviors that have caused problems in your life. Ultimately your goal is to stop doing these behaviors. If you engage in one of these activities, you are not sexually sober. Common behaviors included in the inner boundary are:

- Paying for sex
- Infidelity (cheating on a partner or a spouse)
- Webcam sex
- Masturbating to pornography
- Using hookup apps
- Having casual and/or anonymous sex

- Mixing substance abuse with sexual activity
- Exhibitionism
- Voyeurism
- Sexual massage
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Middle Boundary.** This boundary includes risky or triggering thoughts, feelings, people, places, behaviors, and situations that might lead you to act out sexually. Common behaviors included in the middle boundary are:

- Lying
- Working late
- Feeling overly tired, irritable, stressed, hungry, anxious, angry, bored, lonely, etc.
- Missing a therapy or group session
- Depression
- Unstructured time alone
- Arguing with a loved one
- Poor self-care (lack of sleep, skipping the gym, eating poorly, etc.)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Outer Boundary.** This boundary includes healthy behaviors you can engage in when you are triggered to act out sexually. Based on your interests and goals, over time these behaviors create a sense of peace, freedom, and joy in your life. This list reflects a healthy combination of work, recovery activities, family time, and recreation. Common behaviors included in the outer boundary are:

- Attending individual or group therapy
- Working out, going to the gym
- Eating healthy
- Spending more time with family
- Reconnecting with old friends
- Rejoining your church, temple, or synagogue and becoming an active member
- Going back to school
- Developing a new hobby
- Volunteering and becoming active in the community
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**A note on masturbation:** For some, masturbation is an integral part of the addiction cycle and could be included in either the inner or middle boundary lists. But for others, it might actually aid recovery. It's best to discuss this issue with your counselor or accountability partner, if you have one.

During recovery, it is essential to focus on living in your outer boundary and avoiding your inner boundary. The behaviors listed in your outer boundary describe how you want to live your life, the inner boundary is about abstaining, and the middle boundary is about being careful with risky or triggering activities.

Which boundary gives you an action plan for long-term sobriety? \_\_\_\_\_

Who can support you in following your plan? \_\_\_\_\_

On the next page, you will create your Sexual Boundary Plan. Keep this plan handy so you can refer to it frequently. You might consider sharing it with a loved one, your accountability partner, or your therapist.

## My Goals and Boundaries

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accountability Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

### My Goals:

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### Inner Boundary (activities I want to stop):

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### Middle Boundary (risky or triggering things):

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### Outer Boundary (healthy behaviors and activities that support my goals):

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflections on This Exercise

Do you think your boundary plan will help you during your recovery? Why or why not?

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What other resources can you use to make it more likely you will stay in your outer boundary?

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What can you do to make it more likely you will avoid your inner boundary?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5= moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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