



Live Forum- November 21 2019  
THE BEAUTY OF BOUNDARIES

## WELCOME

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Dear 3rd Thursday Assemblers! Welcome back, or, if it's your first time WELCOME!

This is an exciting monthly online forum where people all over the world can gather to share ideas and good practice about different aspects of group facilitation.

Below you will find: A Check-in Question (please answer!); Goals and Agreements for today's session (please add anything you need/want to the agreements, and hit "like" to agree to uphold these agreements during the session); discussion questions and case studies (posted approximately every ten minutes; answer in any order). I will be facilitating this experience for 90 minutes. There will be a pdf transcript posted on the [pyeglobal.org](http://pyeglobal.org) website, as well as the files of this facebook page, in a short while. These transcripts are so great we're thinking of making a book out of them!

Remember to keep refreshing the page to read the latest comments, and scroll down the page to read all threads. The threads will appear in order of most active, which can be confusing!

This month we are discussing: 'The beauty of boundaries: saying 'no' and being direct as a facilitator'

As a facilitator, we interact with many people in our groups and also, build a positive and safe container for the people in our groups to interact with each other. Personal boundaries and group boundaries are a key part of maintaining safety, respect and making explicit other values and norms for ourselves and our groups. Very strong and rigid boundaries could be constraining and perhaps off-putting, making a facilitator unapproachable, but consistent and appropriate boundaries can be liberating, through increasing safety, and trouble-shooting conflict, and also guarding our personal energy and safety as a facilitator. It can be necessary and helpful sometimes to say 'no' and be direct as a facilitator, both in service of ourselves and our group's process, for example in dealing with resistance, conflict or other emerging situations. The nature of facilitation work, for example with young people or vulnerable adults, can foster strong relationships during sharing transformational experiences, which necessitates good boundaries for safeguarding and child protection. However, because we are often 'in service' to others in this work, thinking about boundaries and making these visible can easily slip off our radar until there is an issue! Many facilitators work in 'caring' or giving professions, such as youth work or education, where personal boundaries are essential in order to sustain our energies and work appropriately with vulnerable people dealing with big emotions or working with trauma.

Today we will explore the beauty of boundaries and share experiences about how we set and maintain healthy boundaries and ways we can be direct as a facilitator in an appropriate way.

## Goals and Agreements

### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Goals and Agreements for this session on 21st November 2019:



1) To share experiences on working with boundaries

-Reflecting on our own experiences and hearing those of other facilitators round the world is a rich ground for learning

2) To increase our options as facilitators

- having more options on working with boundaries helps us to trouble-shoot and also respond to situations effectively, making easy what could be stressful!

3) To have fun

- adding some joy and happiness helps everything along 😊

In order to achieve these, here are some suggestions for COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS to make our time together flow really well. Be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS. Let the group know or privately message the facilitator if you are concerned that an agreement is being broken.

1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe. If the facilitator finds your comments aggressive or inappropriate in any way you will receive a personal message.

2) Be willing to entertain simultaneous truths. Rather than proving a point, try to listen to understand, and be willing to agree to disagree. At the same time, if you have a strong belief be willing to stand up for it. This will make our conversations rich!

3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow. Ask questions, make comments, connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often. The questions move around depending on how many people are answering, so please scan the whole page for new questions now and then.

4) Maintain CONFIDENTIALITY by not sharing names or personal information about the participants in your groups, sharing from your own perspective, and asking permission before sharing someone else's story.

5) Answer any questions in the COMMENTS below the question to keep the conversation organized and readable. Only open NEW questions in new threads.

6) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!) A pdf transcript of the conversation will be provided. Feel free to continue the conversation even after the 90 minute period has ended.

## **Introduction Circle**

### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Introduction circle: who is here today? Please tell us 1) something about your work 2) what country you are in 3) one thing you hope to get from the discussion today



**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** Hi this is Sezin from Turkey, i am a facili-trainer at YaraticıLiderlik and i hope this gonna be inspiring like the ones before :)

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Hi Sezin! Welcome - great to have you here!  
**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** 🙏

**Kitty Jackson** Hi there - I am Kitty and I work with young people. I also work with women's circles and sharing circles. Today I would love to connect with other facilitators and inhale some wisdom

**Kathy Butt- Ellwand** Hi Kitty! Thanks for joining....breathe in...breathe out! Like the song...

**Kathy Butt Ellwand** Hello! I'm a PYE facilitator and mum, and apart from facilitating this forum I also work with mums and young children using the creative empowerment model and community singing. I'm in Cornwall in the UK and I hope to learn something new and get surprised by this discussion today!

**Aida Gadallah** i'm Aida from luxor - Egypt. I'm facili-trainer works with different ages . The topic of today is very interesting for me and i'd like to know about boundaries.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Welcome back Aida! Lovely to see you here.

**Kelli Mae** Kelli Mae from the US. I work with youth and teachers to integrate yoga, movement, and mindfulness into their classes. It's my first time here so I'm happy to see what it's all about!

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Welcome Kelli Mae! Great to have you here, hope you enjoy it!

**Bunty Cumberpants** Ruth (Bunty) from Oxfordshire, UK, just back from facilitating a monthly self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities. Still at work now, but hoping to join today. This is an interesting topic and came up in our session this afternoon, so hoping to hear about how other people deal with boundaries.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Welcome back Bunty Cumberpants! Always lovely to see you here.

Bunty Cumberpants Thank you!

**Tai Barosso** Hey I am Tai Barroso, originally from Brasil and living in Portugal for the past 2 years. I am the editor of a community newspaper here in Lisbon which is a tool of integration and empowerment for Imigrants and locals. I have co-hosted a PYE youth camp in Rio de Janeiro in 2014. Been engaged with anti-racism fight, working on a project called Diasporic Narratives and... working on gettingt back to being a facilitator of processes ans designer of experiences



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**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Bemvinda Tai Barosso great to have you here today.

**Sunshine Turner** Hello everyone, my name is Stephanie, I work as a senior trainer with PYE and I'm in the process of setting up a community kitchen and cafe. I'm based in London, England. I'm hoping to expand my understanding and leave with some powerful questions.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Hi Sunshine Turner thanks for much for joining great to see you!

**Ali A Very** Hi all, I'm Ali in London, I'm arriving late because I've been getting R E A L L Y cold out getting young adults registered to vote in the upcoming UK general election (they stopped automatically registering young people so it's a big bit of work!) I've been working in a school based creative arts mental health project for the past years and doing other work as a facilitator and trainer, especially in school-based and residential settings. I'm hoping to learn something from what you've all generously shared after getting a lot out of the session last month!

**Kathy Butt- Ellwand** Welcome [Ali A Very](#)! Great to have you and thanks for encouraging young people to vote- so important! You can leave comments for the rest of the month so take your time x

**Nadia Chaney** Hi! I'm Nadia. I'm about to start an arts based research lab studying the nature of time. I'm based in Montreal. Hoping to connect and gain some insight

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Hi Nadia! <3

## CHECK IN

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Check in Question: Describe how you feel right now as a type of weather..

**Kitty Jackson** A bit grey and overcast

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Pink Sunset

**Aida Gadallah** Snowy weather

**Sunshine Turner** I feel like the fresh air that comes with the first rain after days and days of hot sun



## DISCUSSION QUESTION 1

### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Discussion Question 1: Please share 3 boundaries that are important to you as a facilitator when you work with groups, and why

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** [Kitty Jackson](#) [Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu](#) [Aida Gadallah](#)....what do you think? Could be personal boundaries, or group agreements, groundrules, or something else.....

**Kitty Jackson** Personal boundaries are always important and always something I struggle with! It's hard to find a good balance between caring for the participants and making sure they are comfortable and being able to claim your own space and boundaries.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** I totally resonate with this [Kitty Jackson](#)....I would like to be more intentional and set some personal boundaries consciously each time....

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** Group agreements! I believe these are not only for safetiness of group but also safety for interactions within the group. And if we can keep them as group eventhough wawes are coming we will be ok.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Group agreements are a great tool...do you have a particular way to do these?

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** i am trying honour somehow at any chance. If i explain smt, it can be an example or reason. Or i remention at framing 'pls pay atteion to... because we signed ..'

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** This is great, [Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu](#) to keep reinforcing them... I always make sure I put them up on a wall now, because sometimes I forget and it's great to have them visible!

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** I think my personal boundaries are....something about sharing myself and my personal life, but only what is appropriate for the group, and only what I feel comfortable with (be open but maintain a professional distance)...give only 75% of my energy to the group and keep some back for me....and for the group...keep everyone accountable for opinions/behaviour that could disrespect or hurt others and try to hold space to learn from these, and also timing...try to be direct in the moment and also through group agreements at the beginning so that people dont take up more talking time than others, and so that I also end sessions on time to allow breaks for self care and spacious feeling for the group.

**Bunty Cumberpants** Yes, I think that this is interesting ... to have our own personal boundaries, as well as group agreements. Sometimes I find that there are crossovers between these and I can use my



personal experiences to kick off a discussion about them ... ie., avoiding put downs of self or others "does anyone ever else get that niggling voice in their head?" and "how is that for you?"

**Kitty Jackson** Hi Bunty! So nice to see you online. It would be really interesting to actually write down some boundaries for yourself before a session and create a little self-ceremony around agreeing to them.

**Bunty Cumberpants** Hi [Kitty Jackson](#) ... that's such a lovely idea!

**Tai Barosso** Being Brazilian boundaries is something we are not really aware of, we sort of confuse everything. But answering the question:

- Group mood is important, I'm very sensitive about
- I am 100% intolerant to intolerance and prejudice (any kind) so I am always aware on taking care of that
- Not giving 100% for the group - even putting myself into a very vulnerable situation, exposing my life, I don't leave my "energy" there. I am normally recharged after a group session.

**Aida Gadallah** 1- personal boundaries:

mutual respect between me and the group and between each others .

what i / any participant can share with feeling comfortable and safe

Take a time for break to not be burn out

Those boundaries are important for me because this will engage and encourage each one to participate fully , learn from each others and to sparks to evoke

But it is not easy and i struggle with it

2- Group agreements :

Keep our agreements a life because we put them together and i feel they build a kind of safe and trust

3- the boundaries of the safe educational environment : not allow or accept behaviours , words that can break this container

**Sunshine Turner** Great Question! For me, as a facilitator.. 1. I need to be able to take care of my basic needs, self care and energy levels to be able to show up for the group.. so personal boundaries around time, work and taking care of my own needs. 2. Time is an important boundary for me when working with groups. When I'm leading, I need to keep time, to be on time and to manage the time between activities for the group. 3. If people are causing harm to each other, it's important to create and hold boundaries to reduce the harm as much as I can.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Loving hearing all of these...it seems to be very linked to our core beliefs and values as well as cultural norms in different countries...all your responses give me lots of food for thought.



## DISCUSSION QUESTION 2

### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Discussion Question 2: Describe a time when you had to say no to a group, or enforce a boundary. What happened? What did you learn?

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** I think there is a thin line between enforcement and encouragement! At one of the community building camps that we invite to stretch people at any session, I remember one of the participant passed through a big boundary for him and it was really hard to hold the group to continue listening! Subject was sensitive and he went to deep. I am glad that we are a good team so co-facilitation dynamics solved it.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Did the participant share very emotional things that the group found triggering?

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** [Kathy Butt-Ellwand](#) not only sharing, also attack to the group and the team

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Very tricky situation...glad you had a good team with your co-facilitator to hold it.

**Sunshine Turner** A couple of weeks ago, I was working in a school with a group of young people who are in an alternative provision. We were doing a spray painting activity outside and on the boundary of the school and the neighbouring estate. I explained to the young people that we had brought these materials for everyone to have a good time together and that the spray paint was for the T-shirts and not for the walls. I put out a clear boundary; "if you spray paint anywhere other than the t-shirt, you have to go inside" two boys decided spraying the wall was a good idea and so they were asked to go inside. One of them asked for a second chance and I said no. I felt like in my heart, I wanted to give him a second chance because it looked like he was influenced by the other boy who painted the wall but I enforced the boundary. After the activity, we had a conversation with the group about their impact on the neighbouring estate and how people might see this group. The boy who had asked for a second chance suggested cleaning the paint from the walls. He led the group whilst the other boy decided not to clean the mess he had made. Fortunately it was water based paint and easily cleaned off. The boy who cleaned the paint was rewarded by the cook with extra dessert. I learnt about those boys, the school and that water based paint is always a good idea.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** It sounds like your clarity and compassionate 'no' lead to some good learning and a positive outcome. I admit I find it really hard to say no, but I have learned that people do accept a fair 'no' like in your example often with good grace!



### DISCUSSION QUESTION 3

#### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Discussion Question 3: How do you communicate your boundaries with your groups and co-facilitators?

**Tai Barosso** I normally start talking about trust and how we should all go on this boat together and trust the process. At the end we will all be happy and satisfied, but we have to go through tough things together (depending on the situation). I try to be clear that I am not the master of anything and that if I don't know something they ask, I will let them know I don't know.

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** With the team, before participant comes it is the best solve as a core circle, boundaries, conflicts etc. With the group just be clear on roles and agreements

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** I try to have a face to face meeting with my co-facilitator beforehand where we can talk about our personal needs/boundaries and make some agreements. I love the PYE group agreement process because it lets the facilitator set some boundaries, and it also allows the group to set boundaries for each other.

### CASE STUDY 1

#### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Case Study 1: You are working with a very experienced group of facilitators leading an advanced facilitation training. You have experienced a lot of resistance especially from two individuals, who have also been dominating discussions. How can you set boundaries with them, and be direct, without alienating them or causing them to switch off?

**Kitty Jackson** I think you need to be clear and honest that their way of being in the group is holding the rest of the group back. Specifically, I think a good check in with these 2 participants would help in order to find out what they are trying to communicate with that behaviour or what is being triggered for them by the session

**Aida Gadallah** I'll say : I know how much experience do you have which i'm curious to learn from it in the same team i notice that i don't hear from others so in your opinion what do we need to do to hear the voices of others who sure they have something to learn from ?





**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** Step up-step back egzersize invitation can help. It can be even a way of energizer for the group to mirror somehow.

**Kitty Jackson** Love hearing all the different ideas around this! So helpful

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Thanks everyone these are all great! [Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu](#) can you explain the step up step back exercise please?

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** I worked with a facilitator who is a great talker and when this situation happens he always says a story about himself, and explains that he has noticed some people being very ready to share and talk but others not having so much space, and he explains that he has always been the first kind of person who always jumps in and talks a lot, but that he has learned to do '3 before me' which means to wait till 3 people have shared before offering his thoughts to a discussion. I like this because it doesn't 'shame' the people who have been dominating, and also gives them a practical way to give others space.

**Joanne Lauterjung** What I like about this approach is that the facilitator is modeling the behavior they want to see. Very important!

**Sunshine Turner** I like these responses. I usually mention balancing voice right up front during the agreements process and ask the group to take responsibility for this. I also use the 3 before me story. I let the group know I may interrupt to help keep balancing the voice. Considering this is an advanced group of facilitators I would hope that would be enough to prevent the imbalance happening or being too stark.

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** I like the warning the group upfront that you might interrupt to balance voice...this is one of the things I find most tricky and it removes a lot of the awkwardness....[Sunshine Turner](#)

**Joanne Lauterjung** I know I'm a day late to this, but would like to comment. I think making it clear when setting up group agreements that hearing all voices is something to strive for. Groups here in Myanmar sometimes need an experience to show the value of hearing all voices - it's a strongly hierarchical culture, so I have a systems thinking exercise that shows the value of hearing from everyone. Moves them from competition to collaboration. If there are some really dominant people (I've worked with religious leaders, and that's often the case), then I put in some structured exercises like timed talking. Sometimes the dialogue structures have to be there to give everyone an experience of "equal time", and then we can talk about it. Those people who dominate are trying to get a need met, and I try hard to figure out what that need is, and gently guide them to a different strategy.



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## CASE STUDY 2

### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Case Study 2: You are leading a check in circle at a community meeting. There are about 30 people in the room and you have invited the group to introduce themselves, very briefly, because of the large number of people in the room. You are on the 4th person and each share has been getting longer and longer....what can you do to set a boundary of time while taking care of the feelings of the person that has just shared? What could you have done before the circle began to avoid this?

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** Create an example of the share before it starts. Then if it is needed maybe repeat the framing. Also remind the group that we have enough time for all sharings that are coming but the space is for.... Now

**Aida Gadallah** yes i agree with this

**Bunty Cumberpants** Yes, I agree too, I always give an example first and reiterate this where necessary

**Sunshine Turner** yes, agree. Model a clear example. Let the group know that I will interrupt to help get back on track if going on long. Refine and clarify my questions so that I get the answers I'm looking for. Give a sense of time and responsibility to the group e.g. say something like 'we have 15 mins and 30 people so about 30 seconds each, let's do our best to keep time and give each other space to share'..

**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** What do you do if people are taking AGES near the beginning of the circle...I find it so awkward to be direct once this happens...would love to hear your different ways to deal with this....

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** [Kathy Butt-Ellwand](#) ones i remember i just cut one participant by saying 'I hear this is going to another direction, but this circle's aim is....' the intervene entrance is really important not to make them feel guilty.

**Joanne Lauterjung** I try to nip it in the bud after the first time. Lets people know to trust the structure you've established. Sometimes they might need a more specific prompt than, "let's check in". For example, "what's one thing you remember from yesterday?" or "what's one thing you're hoping to get today?" or "how's your weather today?"

## CASE STUDY 3



### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Case Study 3: You are running a summer camp youth empowerment programme for 14 – 18 year olds. The programme has clear rules on no drugs, no alcohol or violence, and young people are not allowed to leave the camp grounds at night. Some of the older young people have been bending the last rule, and sneaking out after dark to meet up with friends. This is clearly crossing a boundary, which has health and safety and safeguarding implications. There is not much time for the young people to hang out together informally during the very busy programme. How would you address this broken boundary with the people involved, and also the whole camp community of young people and staff. How can you be direct and say no, but in a respectful and empowering way?

**Aida Gadallah** Ask the whole group why do you think we put this rule? hear from them to understand their perspective , discover their needs and find a solution together then put a new / modified system with them then ask what have we do if after this , someone broke the rules?

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** Brining agreements and discuss about it again. I'm also thinking maybe some rules rewritten am i open to this? Or for young groups it should not be an open door? I am confused a bit! It depends on the group members maybe...

## **CASE STUDY 4**

### **Kathy Butt-Ellwand**

Case study 4: You are running a professional development training course for school teachers to help them bring creativity and arts into the classroom. It is an intense and busy weekend course. You are working with a co-facilitator you know well, and it's the start of the second and final day and you are both tired. You notice you have been doing the majority of the tidying up and setting up resources for the next sessions during the breaks. The breaks are short because the programme is packed with content. Participants are also coming to you and your co-facilitator with questions and comments and wanting to interact with you during breaks. In effect you feel like you have had no breaks, and no time to do self care. How can you approach this with your group, and your co-facilitator?

**Sezin İlbasmış Dindaroğlu** First thing, creating some minutes with cofacilitator, but if this is not enough, i love being honest to the group about the situation and ask for their help. Somehow group offers the best options to manage all the time!

**Joanne Lauterjung** I always build in 3 daily roles for participants, and rotate them every day: time keeper, cleaning up at the end of the day, and energizer after lunch. This works to help participants "own" the process, too, and takes some pressure off of the facilitators and allows them to be more present for participants.



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**Kathy Butt-Ellwand** Keep commenting! This is shaping up into a great discussion! Live facilitation is over for this month, but commenting is open for the next 4 weeks. Thank you all SO MUCH for your participation. Loved being part of the discussion today ❤️.