

EXERCISE:

# *Trust and Boundaries*<sup>40</sup>

FORMAT:

GROUP  
EXERCISE,  
ICEBREAKER

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

*This is a strong exercise to support participants in expressing their boundaries and equally, to feel trust in others.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask two people – preferably who do not know each other – to pair off.
- They should stand 10–15 feet apart, facing each other.
- Explain that one person is going to walk, one will stand still, and that the person who is standing is learning what feels okay to them in terms of physical space.
- Explain to the standing person that they can use three motions that are signals: first, both hands at your sides and up (stop!) – means the walker has to stop, even if they have not started walking; second, arms halfway down, palms out – they can come very slowly; and third, palms open, arms down – you can come towards me.
- Both partners have to maintain eye contact the whole time.
- Ask the other person to walk towards their partner very slowly.
- Ask the standing person to feel in their bodies the person coming towards them, and to use the signals that feel right to either stop them or to encourage them to come closer
- Some people may never be able to put their arms down – that is fine, the walker needs to know that. The

pair can repeat the exercise a few times to gauge this within themselves. They do not have to use all of those movements; they can mix them up.

- The partners then switch roles.
- Once the group has observed the exercise, ask everyone to pair up and to practice the exercise with their partners, making sure that everyone has a chance to play both roles.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- After the exercise, facilitators can give participants an opportunity to reflect on how it felt for them, in both roles. It should have given participants an opportunity to feel and clearly communicate their own boundaries, and to also understand their own power to protect themselves, to receive support and experience trust.