6. Boundaries in relationships

Healthy boundaries make healthy relationships; they have appropriate intimacy and appropriate boundaries. Two sides of the same coin. Different boundaries with different people.

<u>Types of boundary:</u>
1. **Physical and sexual** – space, touch, time and place.
2. **Emotional –** how we allow others emotional states to influence our own. Do I allow people to treat me like a doormat? The bully, the invader, the manipulator etc.
3. **Reality –** <u>perceptions</u>, issues, <u>beliefs</u>, opinions, values**.**
4. **Moral** – values, commitments etc.
5. **Information (self-disclosure)** how much is it safe to reveal? Respect privacy.
6. **Needs and wants**: I may not be able to meet your needs and wants, and vice versa.
7. **Rights –** mine and others';
8. **Responsibilities –** mine and others'.

<u>Range of boundaries</u>:
1. **Enmeshed** – too close and dependent (co-dependent); relying on others' opinions; compromise to avoid conflict; share information too quickly; difficult to say no.
2. **Rigid** – keeping people at a distance; rarely share personal information; rarely speak about feelings; rarely ask for help.
3. **Balanced/flexible**: can adjust to suit the relationship or the situation.

Boundary violations: invading another's space, privacy, vulnerability, freedom, values.

Role conflict and boundary violations:
1. Mixture of personal and professional roles.
2. Imbalance of power and vulnerability.
3. Reversal of roles e.g. parishioner supporting pastor, retreatant supporting director.
4. Situation of "double bind" e.g. if the boss uses a volunteer's 'eagerness to belong' to get the volunteer to take on too much.
5. Professional privilege: where authority/status/power is used for personal gain or need, e.g. clericalism.
6. Withholding information that a person is entitled to.

Healthy boundaries:
Have intimate relationships apart from ministerial life;
Be accountable from the beginning of any relationship. To self, to the other, to a guide.
Be aware of feelings, especially when emotional boundaries are in question.