

Session 03

Dealing with boundaries

Material/wall

Horse metaphor, tape

Wall with many different footholds and holds, to show turning in

Goal of the day

Experience boundaries of personal strength and mobility, perception of own boundaries, acceptance of boundaries, dealing with own boundaries, recognising the role of boundaries in day to day life.

Exercises

5-4-3-2-1, Warm-up, Balance exercises, Learning to fall, Kraken, The tree

Alternative exercise: Shadow climbing

Starting phase

00:00	Mindfulness exercise	5-4-3-2-1
00:10	Checking in	<i>How am I today?</i>
00:30	Topic: Dealing with boundaries	Boundaries in bouldering: strength, endurance (physically), motivation, frustration tolerance, concentration, confidence (psychologically). Horse metaphor: Knowing one's own boundaries is important to gain more insight into what one can do – underestimation: not reaching goals, barriers, not daring to do something; overestimation: overwhelm, fear, exhaustion, pain, disappointment, frustration.

Active phase

00:35	Warm-up	Warm-up in the group, group ritual optional
00:40	Group exercises	Balance exercises <i>How do you notice your own boundaries?</i> (body becomes more restless, mind "I can't go on")
00:45	Group exercise	Learning to fall <i>Were there limits here in the head (psychological limits)?</i>
01:00	Bouldering exercise	Kraken on the wall In small groups/pairs Turning in as a possibility to expand boundaries

Final phase

01:35	Final round	<i>What are you taking with you today? What experiences have you made in relation to boundaries?</i>
01:50	Relaxation exercise	The tree

5-4-3-2-1

Therapist version

Description

This exercise is performed in a sitting position.

Find a comfortable, upright seating position. Direct your attention to what is around you.

Name (out loud or in thoughts) what you are perceiving in this moment:

5x : I see...!	→	5x : I hear...!	→	5x : I feel...!
4x : I see...!	→	4x : I hear...!	→	4x : I feel...!
3x : I see...!	→	3x : I hear...!	→	3x : I feel...!
2x : I see...!	→	2x : I hear...!	→	2x : I feel...!

Lastly

1x : I see...!	→	1x : I hear...!	→	1x : I feel...!
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Tips

It's okay to name the same perceptions/sensations over and over again!

If, for example, sounds disturb you during the phase of seeing, simply switch to hearing and integrate the sounds into your perception in this way.

If you get confused with the sequence of the exercise, this is a sign that you are doing well and relaxing particularly quickly. You can then either linger in that state or "guess" where you were and continue.

During the exercise, if you notice your eyes wanting to close, let them close! You can then either describe the specific perceptions of the closed eyes or just listen and feel.

For some, it enhances the positive effect of the exercise if they speak the perceptions aloud while hearing their own voice.

Topic - Session 03

Dealing with boundaries

Background information

Knowledge and awareness of one's boundaries is important to both maintain boundaries (to protect oneself) and to transcend boundaries consciously (to grow and develop oneself). When we underestimate our own boundaries and these become transgressed, we can feel overwhelmed, afraid, exhausted, painful, disappointing and frustrating. When boundaries are overestimated, then we have too little confidence in ourselves, which will hinder us to reach goals.

Therefore, it is important to be mindful of one's boundaries. There are physical (bodily) and psychological (thinking) boundaries. In bouldering physical boundaries are for example strength and endurance, psychological boundaries are created by example motivation, tolerating frustration, focus, and confidence. Warning signals for overstepping one's boundaries are pain, exhaustion, fear, or anger.

This session's goal is to become more aware of one's boundaries and deciding whether the boundary should be kept, or consciously overstepped, to expand one's learning/action (compare to the [Learning zones model](#)). Especially with mental boundaries it can be helpful to consider a different approach or take a new perspective to expand one's boundaries.

Key questions

Do you know your boundaries? Are you always aware of your boundaries?

What kind of boundaries are there in bouldering?

What function do boundaries have? What are their pro's and con's?

How do you notice your boundaries?

What happens when you over- or underestimate your boundaries?

How do you feel that you are at your limit? Which signals does your body send you, what do you perceive?

How do you deal with your boundaries? How do you deal with personal boundaries in your day-to-day life? Do these protect you or restrict you?

Learning goals

To differentiate between mental boundaries (motivation, tolerance of frustration "I will never be able to do this") and bodily/physical boundaries (i.e. strength, endurance).

Boundaries help, to better estimate one's own capabilities:

Underestimation of one's boundaries leads to overwhelm, exhaustion, fear, pain, disappointment, feeling frustrated.

Overestimating one's own boundaries leads to not being able to reach goals, restrictions on oneself ("to not feel able to try anything")

Goal: Maintenance and care of personal boundaries that protect oneself and expansion of boundaries that are too restrictive.

Horse metaphor

Proud Arabian stallion or kind Haflinger

The Arabian as a proud horse, high, elegant, purebred and fast. We like the idea of riding this horse and making a good figure. We struggle to get up on the high horse, maybe our legs are too short, the horse also gets nervous because we are so clumsy and keep falling off. Then it might be better to choose a Haflinger. Granted, this one is not as elegant and not as fast, but who says that we can't do our rounds with it and have fun? After all, we don't have to be afraid of constantly falling off again and landing in the sand.

In other situations, you only dare to ride the Haflinger or even just a rocking horse. But you can cut a fine figure on an Arabian horse, if only you would dare and go for it. And once you have ridden the Arabian, you will realize how much fun it is for you.

The important thing is not the horse you ride, but that it is YOUR horse that suits you and on which you feel comfortable.

Warm-up and cool-down

Individual exercise

Description

Participants are inducted to warm-up before starting to boulder and cool-down at the end.

The warm-up consists of 3 parts:

1. Cardio warm-up: starjumps, jumping jacks
2. Mobilisation: open and close fists (with arms outstretched or at an angle), wrist turns, move arms to side and flip palms up and down, move head to each side, circle arms back and forth, cat-cow pose on all fours, stretch sideways, stretch hands down to the toes while standing, twist and stretch ankles.
3. Warm-up climb: climb 3-4 easy routes below your own level to warm-up.

Cool down consists of stretches to all muscle groups that were used.

Material/wall

Free room or space on mats

Key questions

Which exercise did you like last time? How did it go?

Variations

Due to time constraints and depending on the content of the lesson, the warm-up climb may be omitted.

Tips

Increasingly involve participants to encourage initiative.

Balance exercise

Individual exercise

Description

The participants should try to keep their balance first in the one-leg stand and then in the standing balance, paying attention to their body tension and concentrating entirely on themselves.

Material/wall

Free room or space on mats

Therapeutical themes

Mindfulness, concentration, centre of gravity/body sensation

Key questions

Pay attention to how your body's centre of gravity changes and how far you can go. How are you doing with your body awareness?

Where are your limits? How do you notice that you are reaching your limits (physically/psychologically)?

Variations

The exercise is more difficult with eyes closed and head tilted back. In addition, the surface can be varied: e.g. mats vs. solid floor.

Another variation is to do the exercise together, with the participants standing in a circle and stretching out their arms so that each hand hovers over the shoulder of the next without touching it. The experience here is: even felt support gives security.

Tips

Insecure participants can stand next to another participant or a wall to support themselves if necessary.

It helps focusing on a point in the room to keep the balance.

Learning to fall

Individual exercise

Description

Participants are instructed to fall correctly and with as little risk of injury as possible. Special attention is paid to the head and arms: The chin should be pressed on the chest and the arms should be struck rigidly on the floor next to the upper body.

Material/wall

Free room or space on mats

Key questions

How far do you want to go? Where is your limit? How does it feel to "let yourself fall"?

Variations

Several variations in ascending difficulty: first, just lying down, pressing the chin to the chest and hitting the mat with the arms; then, from a sitting position with the feet up, let the chin tip backward; next, from a squatting position, let the chin fall backward; then, from a standing position, squat and fall backward; and finally, from a low kick, jump into a squat and fall backward.

Tips

It is important to let everyone do the exercise at their own pace: Participants should pay close attention to how far they want to go and what their limits are.

Being careful that the "falling area" is free and there is enough space to the wall, and that the movements are carefully carried out (straight arms, chin on chest).

Kraken

Individual exercise

Description

The exercise can be done either in groups of two, or with guidance from the therapist. For this purpose, suitable large holds are selected in advance, on which the participants can hang well and try out their reach. First, the participants are asked to estimate how far they can reach from the respective grip. The presented reach is marked with tape (by the therapist or the partner). Then the participant climbs up the wall (feet placed as desired) and tries out the actual reach by stretching as far as possible in all directions. The actual reach is marked with tape in a different color. When all directions are taped, have participants take a step back and look at the result.

Afterwards, the technique of turning in is explained and demonstrated by the therapist. The participants can then try this out on "their" hold and the range with turning in is again marked with tape.

Material/wall

Tape

Wall with many different steps and large handles to be able to show turning in and different load directions of the handles/steps

Therapeutical themes

Expectations and self-estimation, body feeling, centre of gravity, estimation of own performance, boundaries

Key questions

Before turning in: *How do you notice that you have reached your boundaries? What signals does your body send you, what do you perceive? How do you deal with your boundaries?*

After turning in: *How did the different ranges differ? How does it feel? How did you perceive it when you expanded the boundary? How did it feel to try a new technique?* (Mental boundaries: how to use a new approach or perspective to expand one's boundaries, what feels strange at first, is later relieving)

Variations

This exercise can also be carried out with a focus on steps/feet; from one start position on the wall (2 boulders, 1 step) one tries to touch as many steps as possible. Further the difficulty can be increased, with the grips not touching, but also held.

Tips

It makes more sense to mark the reach on the wall than the handles. In addition, it can be helpful to use different colored tape (not a must).

The tree

Therapist version

Additional tips

This exercise is done while standing. Leave enough time between paragraphs and read slowly in a meditative voice.

Description

Stand comfortably, with both feet firmly and securely on the floor. Now close your eyes and spread your arms.

Imagine that roots start growing slowly from your feet into the ground. They connect you firmly to the ground. You stand like a strong and steady tree, on a meadow.

It is a windy day and you feel the wind blowing through your branches. Let the wind blow through your branches and move your arms to it. The wind is now getting stronger and stronger and you start to move your upper body, your trunk, into the direction of the wind.

Your feet, the roots, are meanwhile firmly anchored in the ground. (indicate different wind directions-> the wind comes from the front, from the right side,...).

Now feel how the wind gradually decreases and your branches are moved only occasionally and slightly, until they are finally completely still again.

Now focus your attention on your roots. All the energy you take up from the ground with your roots flows through your trunk, through your entire body, down to the last little branch, your fingertips. Really fill up with life energy and strength! Gather this flow of energy.

When you are ready, say goodbye to your tree existence and become yourself again. You consciously breathe in and out deeply, stretch your arms and legs and are back in the here and now.