

CREATING HEALTHY

BOUNDARIES

Polk Presbyterian Church Boundary Training

Revision 1.0

Approved by Session 01.21.2014

What is a Boundary?

A boundary is a clear place where you begin and the other person ends. Think of it as a fence in your backyard. You are the gatekeeper and you decide who you let in and who you keep out. Who you let in the whole backyard and who you let just inside the gate.

Professional boundaries are complex because they involve personal values, culture and ethics.





- Psychoanalysts use the term “taboo” to describe forbidden activities, feelings or relationships.
- All societies seem to have particular rules and rituals to deal with bodily functions, sexuality and death, sometimes expressed in terms of hygiene or religion and these keep them separated off from everyday life.
- When social rules function well they are invisible. Have you ever noticed that we only notice them when we have committed a *faux pas* and caused embarrassment?

Setting Limits

- In all relationships, we set limits, a key issue for workers is recognizing when to set a limit.
- As early as possible establish clear agreements with the others regarding your role as a member of clergy/elder/volunteer, your availability and the best ways to communicate with you.



Job Skill Set

Having strong skills in the area's below are important when dealing with others:

- Ability to listen and understand
- Good communication skills
- Interested in helping people
- Having a positive attitude
- Ability to demonstrate professionalism
- Ability to accept and respect the choices of other people.
- Ability to know when to reach out to Coordinators for help.



What are ethics and why are they important?



- Ethics reflect beliefs about what is right and what is wrong.
- Ethical behavior is based on written and unwritten codes of principles and values held in society.
- Ethical principles and values serve as a guide to behavior on a personal level.
- Having strong ethical conduct is critical to being able to provide quality of care and to protect the rights of our consumers.
- Ethical guidelines are important in providing a safe and clear working environment for workers so they can provide effective and goal directed services and support to our consumers.

The Cranky Old Man Poem

- When an Mak Filiser died in a nursing home in an Australian country town, it was believed that he had nothing left of any value.
 - Later, when the nurses were going through his possessions, they found this poem. It's quality and content impressed the staff so much that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital.
 - The old man with nothing left to give the world is now the author of this anonymous poem that has become nationally known.
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- What do you see nurses? What do you see?
 - What are you thinking when you're looking at me?
 - A cranky old man not very wise
 - Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes
 - Who dribbles his food and makes no reply.
 - When you say in a loud voice "I do wish you'd try!".
 - Who seems not to notice the things that you do.
 - And forever is losing a sock or shoe?
 - Who, resisting or not lets you do as you will.
 - With bathing and feeding the long day to fill.
 - Is that what you're thinking? Us that what you see?
 - Then open your eyes nurse, you're not looking at me.



- I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still.
- As I do at your bidding as I eat at your will.
- I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother.
- Brothers and sisters who love one another.
- A young boy of sixteen with wings on his feet.
- Dreaming that soon now a lover he'll meet.
- A groom soon at twenty my heart gives a leap.
- Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.
- At twenty five now I have young of my own.
- Who need me to guide and secure a happy home.
- A man of thirty my young now grown fast.
- Bound to each other with ties that should last.
- At forty my young sons have grown and are gone.
- But my woman is beside me to see I don't mourn.
- At fifty once more babies play around my knee.



- Again we know children, my loved one and me.
- Dark days are upon me...My wife is now dead.
- I look at the future...I shudder with dread.
- For my young are all rearing...young of their own.
- And I think of the years...And the love that I've known.
- I'm now an old man...and nature is cruel.
- It's jest to make old age...look like a fool.
- The body, it crumbles...grace and vigor, depart.
- There is now a stone...where I once had a heart.
- But inside this old carcass a young man still dwells.
- And now and again...my battered heart swells
- I remember the joys...I remember the pain.
- And I'm loving and living...life over again.
- I think of the years, all too few...gone too fast.
- And accept the stark fact...that nothing can last.
- So open your eyes, people...open and see.
- Not a cranky old man.
- Look closer, see ME!!



Lets talk about Dual relationships ...



- A Dual relationship is when the worker and consumer know each other in a personal context from another setting.
- If you had a Dual relationship with your consumer before becoming their worker, you must realize that you must use your professional judgement when interacting with your consumer in social settings.
- You must pay close attention to the consumers confidentiality.



- Example: Bobby has a friend named Jenny who he went to highschool with. Jenny states she would love to work for Bobby and they feel it would be a great working relationship because they are already friends. This is known as a Dual relationship because two roles are now in play, friendship and worker vs. friendship and supervisor.

Signs that boundary Issues may be present



- The worker reveals excessive personal information to the consumer.
- The consumer receives gifts or gives gifts to the worker.
- The consumer and worker are friends on a social media website (Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat, etc.).
- The consumer asks the worker to bring their children, grandchildren or spouse to work with them.



- Example: The worker tells the consumer that they are having money problems and that they won't be able to get to work because they won't have gas money. The consumer gets worried that they won't have help, so they give the worker gas money. The worker accepts the money and promises to pay back the consumer.
- Remember, it's **never** appropriate for a worker to ask a consumer for money, tell a consumer about their private life or accept money from a consumer, even if its offered.

Consequences of having poor boundaries



- Compassion fatigue- the workers role may not feel sustainable.
- Consumer may feel betrayed, abandoned or poorly served.
- The worker may act unethically.
- The reputation of Polk Presbyterian Church could be at risk.
- The worker and/or consumer could be emotionally traumatized or put in physical danger.

Unprofessional Behavior



- Unprofessional behavior happens frequently when the boundary lines become blurry between a parishioner and a clergy/volunteer.
- Some examples of unprofessional behavior include:
 - Being late for meetings.
 - Not treating others with dignity and respect (swearing and/or yelling).
 - Arriving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
 - Making sexual advances or misconduct.
 - Talking negatively about others.
 - Disclosing information about others.

Acknowledgement Firm

I hereby acknowledge that I have reviewed the attached slide show and will follow the Boundries training to the best of my ability.

Signature

Date

***Note: This training is due every three years**

References

- <https://bettercaring.com.au/blog/care-workers/whoa-please-mind-my-boundaries/>
- Wolfe, K. 2008. Retrieved from: www.ProfessionalBoundaries.com
- Professional Development, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://directcare.com.au/2014/02/maintain-professional-boundaries-home-community-care-work/>