

Professional Boundaries

Health care professionals should strive to inspire the confidence of clients, treat all clients and other health care providers professionally, and promote the clients' independence. Clients can expect the Agency's staff to act in their best interests and to respect their dignity. This means that a staff member abstains from obtaining personal gain at the client's expense and refrains from inappropriate involvement in the client's personal relationships.

Professional boundaries are the spaces between the employee's power and the client's vulnerability. The power comes from the staff's position and the access to private knowledge about the client. Establishing boundaries allows a safe connection to meet the client's needs.

Boundary violations can result when there is confusion between the needs of the staff member and those of the client. Such violations are characterized by excessive personal disclosure by the staff member, secrecy or even a reversal of roles. Boundary violations can cause distress for the client, which may not be recognized or felt by the client until harmful consequences occur. For example, tell the client you need more hours in order to provide services to the client. You should discuss this situation with the Scheduling Coordinator or your supervisor, not the client. Discussing your personal problems with a client, keeping secrets with the client, or flirting are considered boundary violations.

Professional sexual misconduct is an extreme form of boundary violation and includes any behavior that is seductive, sexually demeaning, harassing or reasonably interpreted as sexual by the client.

A continuum of Professional Behavior exists:

Under-Involved-----Zone of Helpfulness-----Over-Involved

Distancing	Effective interaction	Boundary Crossings
Disinterest	Client Safety	Boundary Violations
Neglect	Therapeutic Goals	Financial and/or Sexual Misconduct

Health Care Worker's Challenges:

- Be aware
- Be cognizant of feelings and behaviors
- Always act in the best interest of the client
- Discuss any concerns you have with your supervisor

Suicide Prevention

All home care staff are required to observe for and report any client's talk about or threats of suicide, or any guns in the home. Suicide prevention is a priority of the agency and a supervisor should be informed of all concerns about suicide.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Trainer: _____