



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 to provide services to the client. You should discuss this situation with the Scheduling Manager 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

Boundaries between client and staff

Client behaviors can be challenging and for some interactions inappropriate.

Behaviors can occur for numerous reasons; from infections, diagnosis related diseases like deteriorating brain activity like dementia, loneliness, and medication side effects; to name a few. Most behaviors staff can redirect through education. For instance, when a client who is a fall risk wants to ambulate without his or her walker, we can educate and even bring the walker to the client. When behaviors become inappropriate, for example sexual inappropriate behavior, sexual harassment, threatening behavior, these behaviors can be alarming and concerning for staff.

Safety for staff is always paramount. Elite will have a skilled nurse evaluate the client first before admitting the client and sending staff into the home. While staff is in the home, staff should also practice situational



awareness. Always be aware of your surroundings. Identify if something has changed with the client and or his or her person or mindset. If a client exhibits inappropriate behavior, let the client know that that type of behavior is not appropriate. If the client continues to exhibit behavior and the staff feel threatened for their safety; ensure the client is in a safe situation and report that you must step out of the home. Once outside and you are in a safe zone, call the office and or your supervisor to report the occurrence. The office staff and or your supervisor will be able to guide you to what is best for that situation. There is not a one solution that fits all occurrences, and investigations will take place.

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: _____