



WELCOME

LSS/SWC Safe Harbor Training 11/15/16



**Lutheran
Social Service**
of Minnesota



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**



Healthy Professional BOUNDARIES

JIM SCOTT & CARRIE ERICKSON – LSS STREETWORKS
COLLABORATIVE



Introductions

JAMES SCOTT & CARRIE ERICKSON

STREETWORKS



A word
about confidentiality



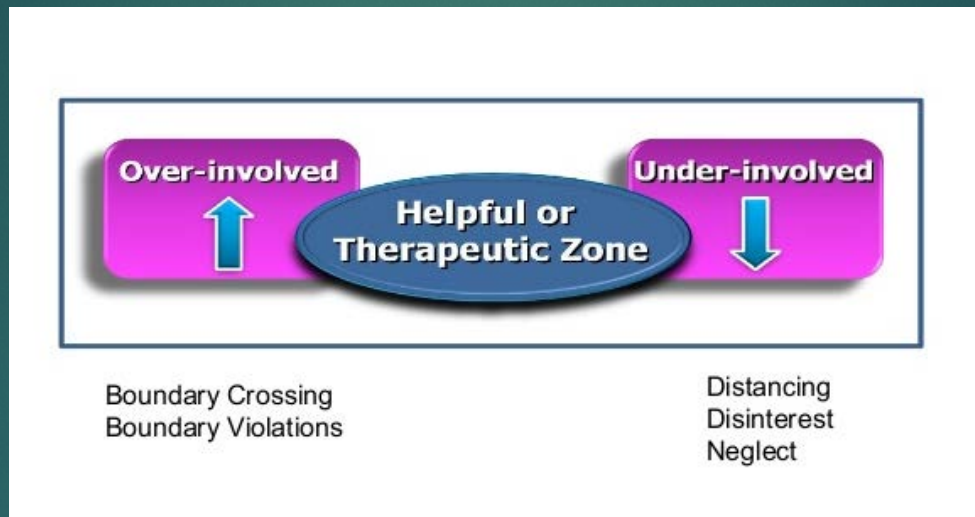
“

Something that shows a
limit or an end.

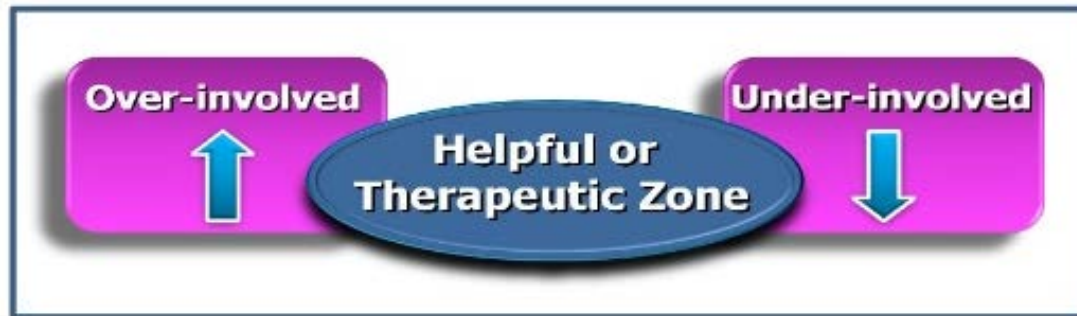
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Merriam-Webster's dictionary definition #1

The Zone of Professionalism



The zone of helpfulness is the center of the professional behavior continuum.




Boundary Crossing
Boundary Violations

Distancing
Disinterest
Neglect

What can over-involvement look like?

What can under-involvement look like?



Boundaries.... the Examples

WHAT ARE THE WORST BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS THAT YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED OR HEARD OF IN YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Common Examples (LSS):

- Do not physically touch a client. If absolutely needed always ask permission first.
- Do not engage in a sexual relationship with a client.
- Do not lend or borrow money, vehicles, or other items to or from the individuals we support.
- Do not transport clients if it is not part of your assignment duties and you have not completed the required Motor Vehicle Record check.
- Do not accept or give gifts or favors of more than nominal value.
- Do not engage in drug use with a client.
- Do not sell or buy merchandise of any kind to or from a client.
- Model appropriate language and behavior.
- Do not impose your personal beliefs and values upon clients, including your religious or spiritual beliefs.
- Do not “vent” to clients about work issues, colleagues, or the agency.



Complex Boundary Scenarios

- ❑ What are the grey areas?
- ❑ What are reasons someone might come up with to break or violate boundaries rules?



Scenario #1:

Facebook friending or giving out your personal number to a client.



Scenario #2:

Sharing your personal history with a client.



Scenario #3:

Working with a client when you're not on the job.



Scenario #4:

Paying a client to mow your lawn.



Scenario #5:

Accepting a gift from a client.



“

A point that indicates
where an area ends, and
another begins.”

Merriam-Webster's dictionary definition #2



Activity: Healthy Professional Boundaries

Boundaries



Boundaries

- ▶ Don't accept gifts
- ▶ Don't give the client money

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- ▶ Don't accept gifts
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- ▶ Don't have sex with clients

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- ▶ Don't have sex with clients

- ▶ You have to follow the rules

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- ▶ Don't have sex with clients
- ▶ You have to follow the rules
- ▶ The relationship is not transactional

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- ▶ The relationship is about them, not you

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- ▶ Your work takes place in their space, not yours

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- ▶ Your work takes place in their space, not yours
- ▶ It is a relationship that promotes independence

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- ▶ It is about their needs and not yours

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- ▶ Your work takes place in their space, not yours
- ▶ It is a relationship that promotes independence
- ▶ It is about their needs and not yours
- ▶ Creates an accountable relationship

What should it look like?

- ❑ The relationship is safe for both the client and the worker.
- ❑ The relationship is supervised and the worker must follow rules, *and this must be transparent from the beginning.*
- ❑ The relationship is consistent but flexible.
- ❑ The relationship promotes independence.
- ❑ The focus of your relationship is on the client's needs, **not your own.** *(This does not mean that a worker's needs are unimportant, but that a worker gets their personal needs met in other ways, outside of their relationship with clients.)*

The Importance of Healthy Boundaries

- ❑ Help providers stay focused on their responsibilities to the youth they serve.
- ❑ Help service providers model healthy communication and professional relationships.
- ❑ Ensures physical and emotional safety.
- ❑ Help providers establish clear understandings with clients regarding roles and expectations.
- ❑ Encourage and allow open communication with team members.



Complex Boundary Scenarios

Are they really as complex as they seem?

#1: Facebook friending or giving out your personal number to a client.

#2: Sharing your personal history with a client.

#3: Working with a client when you're not on the job.

#4: Paying a client to mow your lawn.

#5: Accepting a gift from a client.



Helpful Themes to Keep in Mind

PROFESSIONAL BEST PRACTICES



Power Differentials

- ▶ Youth experiencing homelessness are a particularly vulnerable population!
- ▶ Professional boundaries are the spaces between the helping professional's power and the individual's vulnerability.
- ▶ The power of the helper comes from the professional position and the access to private knowledge about the individual receiving services.
- ▶ Establishing boundaries allows us as professionals to control the power differential and allows a safe connection to meet our the client's needs.
- ▶ The more vulnerable the individual is, the more rigid the compliance with boundary guidelines needs to be.



Professional vs. Personal

- ▶ Too much self disclosure shifts the focus from the client to the service provider, and can confuse the young person in terms of roles and expectations of the relationship.
- ▶ Any sharing of personal information about yourself should be relevant and done with the client's case plan goals in mind.
- ▶ Avoid spending a disproportionate amount of time with one client in particular, or inappropriate amounts of increased contact with a client outside of the contracted relationship.
- ▶ Provider burnout/compassion fatigue is a recipe for bad boundaries! Make sure you are getting enough sleep, eating well, spending time with friends and family, exercising, seeking supervision as needed, and "leaving work at work" to the greatest extent possible.



Appropriate Roles

- ▶ Boundary violations can result when a service provider, consciously or unconsciously, uses their professional relationship to meet personal needs at the expense of meeting the needs of the clients they serve.
- ▶ Professional boundaries require a clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of the role of the service provider, and must be re-visited often.
- ▶ Avoid over-identifying or becoming enmeshed with clients, or putting yourself in the role of being the sole provider in a client's life.
- ▶ Role confusion may lead to the client feeling betrayed, abandoned, and/or poorly served, and may make them unwilling to trust or accept future services from other providers.



Accountability

- ▶ Good boundaries only work when they are a team effort!
- ▶ If a service provider believes that he/she can provide their services better than anyone else can, or believes that the client works best only with him/her, they are running the risk of taking over the roles of other team members, and providing poor service to vulnerable individuals.
- ▶ Consult with your supervisor or professional colleagues if you are feeling uncomfortable about talking with your clients about boundaries.
- ▶ Use your supervisor, professional colleagues and/or a mental health professional as a sounding board when you have questions or concerns regarding boundaries, and especially when boundary issues are impacting your ability to provide objective, compassionate care.



What are your thoughts?

- ❑ Which of these themes/points are jumping out at you?
- ❑ Are there areas in which you think your program/team could use improvement?



WHAT IS MY ROLE?



What are our roles?

- ▶ As a youth provider, your role is more than just a list of job duties - it is a description of your function and your purpose.
- ▶ Take away your day to day schedule. Put aside your personal feeling about what parts of your job you like the best or dislike the most. Shelve the list of "duties as assigned."
- ▶ Think about your role in terms of your purpose with every client. It might help to think about your job if someone else had to come in and do it.



Going Forward

RECOMMENDATIONS

What to do next:

- ▶ Don't let the conversation end here!
- ▶ Talk about boundaries during your next team meeting, and make it a part of your regular professional development.
- ▶ Check in about boundaries issues and topics each time you meet with your supervisor.
- ▶ Avoid getting defensive – strive for team communication around boundaries that is open, honest, calm, and respectful.
- ▶ Consider it part of your job description to discuss definitions of roles with your supervisor and coworkers regularly!



Boundaries and Burnout

- ▶ Studies have shown that ethical misconduct and boundaries violations related to client provision is evident to a greater extent in those who are reporting burnout.
- ▶ You are less vulnerable to ethical violations if you are self-aware and engaged in constant self-care strategies.
- ▶ Self-care enables youth providers to care for their clients in a sustainable way with greater compassion, sensitivity, effectiveness, and empathy.
- ▶ It is an ethical imperative to have a working self-care plan in place!
- ▶ Dimensions of self-care should include: Physical, Social, Emotional/Mental, Creative, Spiritual/Mindfulness



Thank you for coming!

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- CARRIE.ERICKSON@LSSMN.ORG

Next Steps

Take the survey.
Do it.

JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT TRAINING:

SWC Safe Harbor Training Save-the-Date

December 21, 2016
Motivational Interviewing
11:30-1:00 LSS State Center



Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota
for changing lives