Goals for Today

- Stimulate thought and discussion about boundary issues.
- Promote improved ethical practice.
**Boundaries**

- Highly personal translations of moral codes in our relationships with each other.
- They are intrinsically neither negative or positive.
- They exist in all relationships expressed overtly or covertly by symbols and behaviour.
  
  - Bervera & Harper, 1992

**Boundaries**

- Boundaries define formally and informally how professionals are to exercise their power inside the relationship.  
  - Peterson 1992
- Two staff may subscribe to the same ethical codes yet have very different boundaries in their relationships. The very nature of some community support work demands shifting relationship boundaries and constant evaluation of the appropriateness of established boundaries.
  
  - Curtis & Hodge 1994

**Violating Boundaries**

- Serious deviation from professional behaviour is a Boundary Violation. Boundary violations are actions that could bring significant harm to patients, staff or the agency as a whole.
  
  - Morton 2004
Crossing Boundaries

- Grey areas of decision making are recognized, and non-therapeutic behaviours, which are sometimes immediately evident, are considered boundary crossings.
  - Morton 2004

Situations

- Why I am interested in this?
- Situations I have encountered.
- Situate yourself.
- Acknowledge, accept, consider, learn and change.

Considerations

- Remembering perceptions of power
- Reciprocity
- Liability
- We come and go in people’s lives
- We are paid
- Cultural
Free Hugs

Complications
- Age of technology
- Societal expectations
- Employer expectations
- Community connections
- Work/Life Balance
- Generosity of the human spirit

Our Roles
- We care.
- The work that we do.
- How do the people we support understand the relationship?
- What does your employer expect?
- Intimate, personal support.
- We are paid.
“The relationship is as primal as that between a mother and infant, and as complex as that between spouses. It is intimate but professional. It has protocols and serendipity, involves serious reciprocal responsibilities and is premised upon values of warmth, respect and humanity.”

Catherine Frazee, 1998

Recognizing a Boundary Violation

1. Reversal of roles
2. A Secret is involved
3. A Double Bind exists
4. The indulgence of personal privilege

Marilyn Peterson, 1992

What can you do?

- Ethical principles
  - Do no harm. Do good. Autonomy. Fidelity.
- Training
- Recognize the power in your position
- Educate and involve the people you support about boundaries
- Be open about uncertain situations
Questions to Ask Yourself

- Is this in the person’s best interest?
- How does the person receiving support perceive this action/our relationship?
- Am I creating a dependency?
- Will the person feel obligated to me?
- Will I feel obligated to the person?
- Whose needs am I serving?
- Do I benefit from this? Is there a conflict of interest?

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Will this have an impact on the service I am providing?
- How would this be viewed by the individual’s family?
- How would I feel about telling a colleague about this?
- Am I treating the person differently?
- Does this person mean something “special” to me?
- Am I comfortable documenting this?

Where Does Your Agency Stand?

- Mission, Vision, Values
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Rules of Conduct
- Confidentiality
- Ethical codes
- Abuse and Neglect
- Human Rights
- Conflict of Interest
What Next?

- Keep it alive
- Be open and honest about it
- Talk, talk, talk – Consult, consult consult
- Ask questions
- Examine your motives
- More questions than answers

Resources


Contact Information

- For more information or a comprehensive list of resources contact:
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