



Community &
Voluntary Services
cheshire east

Boundaries

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Welcome & Introductions



Aim of the Session

To support voluntary and community groups to look at how their staff and volunteers maintain professional boundaries with service users.

Objectives of the Session

- Understand what boundaries are;
- Understand why having boundaries is important;
- Be able to deal with situations where boundaries may be compromised.

Content

- Definitions of boundaries (personal & professional)
- Why boundaries are important
- Difference between staff/volunteer/service user
- Where blurring of boundaries can occur
- Avoiding crossing boundaries
- Approaches when confronted with potential crossing of boundaries
- Scenarios – break out rooms

Crossing a boundary

Mary has been providing care to Dorothy for over 6 months, and has built a good professional relationship with Dorothy.

Dorothy really appreciates the care that has been provided to her.

Mary takes a personal phone call and Dorothy overhears that Mary is having financial trouble.

Phone call ends, Dorothy offers to lend Mary money. Mary accepts the offer.

What do we mean by 'Boundaries'?

Personal Boundaries

Guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates to identify reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave towards them and how they will respond when someone passes those limits.

Professional Boundaries

The limits to the relationship between someone in a professional role and the person in their care, the borders that mark the edges between a professional relationship and a personal relationship.

Why are Boundaries important?

- Safety
- Trust
- Respect
- Fairness
- Confidentiality
- Accountability
- Legality
- Better decisions
- Gives individuals more confidence
- Manages volunteer/work related stress

Protects you

Protects organisation

Protects service user

Boundaries - Volunteers

Volunteers are not members of employed staff and should not be treated like an employee e.g. follow employee policies/procedures, same role & responsibility as paid staff. However, they are operating on behalf of an organisation, therefore under a professional capacity.

- Volunteers have a duty of care, have to follow volunteer policies, procedures, have a role description.
- Boundaries for volunteers can vary depending on areas such as: their role, their skill level e.g. quals
- Important to lay down expectations to volunteers

Boundaries – Service Users

- Important to lay down expectations of the service they are accessing
- The volunteer/staff member to explain their delivery role to the service user/family/significant others
- What is expected of the service user if they access your service
- Organisation should provide the service user with relevant procedures to follow e.g. complaints

Potential for blurred boundaries

- Disclosing personal information
- Giving or receiving significant gifts
- Becoming friends
- Physical contact
- Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Over identification with client issues
- Dual or over lapping relationships

Unacceptable Practices - examples

- Sexual contact with an individual using the service
- Causing physical harm or injury to individuals
- Making aggressive or insulting comments, gestures or suggestions
- Seeking information on personal history where it is neither necessary nor relevant
- Concealing information about individuals from colleagues, for example, not reporting incidents and concerns, safeguarding issues
- Spreading rumours or hearsay about an individual or others close to them
- Providing specialist advice or counselling where the worker is not qualified
- Any practices specifically prohibited in relevant legislation, statutory regulations, standards and guidance
- Trying to impose own religious, moral or political beliefs on an individual

Avoiding crossing boundaries

- Managing expectations of a role before someone starts e.g. website, role descriptions.
- Policies – Volunteer policy/staff handbook, safeguarding, equality, H&S, confidentiality, social media, professional boundaries
- Procedures – inductions, group meetings, 1:1s, whistleblowing, complaints, taster sessions, problem solving, supervision
- Training – informal and formal, implementing what they have learned – taking it on board?
- Providing examples of acceptable and not acceptable practice to staff/volunteers

Staff are responsible for ensuring implementation & monitoring of volunteers professional practice.

Social media in your personal life

[*Insert name of organisation*] recognises that many employees and volunteers use social media in a personal capacity. Whilst you are not acting on behalf of the Organisation, you must be aware that your actions might damage the reputation of the Organisation.

You are allowed to state that you work/ volunteer for the Organisation, however, your online profile / username must not contain the name of the Organisation.

You must not, under any circumstances, use your Organisation email address in any form of personal social media or on the internet at all in your personal capacity. You must set up your own personal email address.

[*Insert name of organisation*] discourages you from discussing your working life via social media, however, if you choose to do so remember the golden rule.

If you believe that your conduct outside of your working life could impact on your professional life think carefully about your privacy settings, consider friend / follower requests carefully giving consideration to who their friends and followers may be, remove tags on photographs or alternatively refrain from the use of personal social media altogether.

Approach to saying 'No' there and then

Saying no to a service user (especially one you have got to know) can be difficult.

Recommended approach:

- Explain why you have to say no (e.g. It's my org's rules, this is my job role, I have to follow policies and procedures)
- Give them the opportunity to explain how they feel. Show your understanding.
- Keep to your decision, be firm and be consistent in your message
- Offer an alternative solution - signposting, say you'll check with your manager

Break Out Room Task - Scenarios

Scenarios to help you think through how you could make judgements about professional boundaries.

They are intended to provoke reflection and discussion.

In each scenario please discuss:

- At what point is the boundary being crossed?
- What are the risks in this situation?
- What advice would you give?
- What action would you take?

Scenarios

Scenario 1

You're the facilitator for a group around adults with alcohol and drug addiction. You attend a social event for service users that has been arranged by your organisation. At the end, a group want to carry on and go out to the local Wetherspoons for dessert. They invite you along.

What do you do?

Scenarios

Scenario 2

George comes regularly to a support group that you lead on. You have got to know him well. In the course of a conversation he explains that he has spent all his money that week and has no money left for food. He asks if you could lend him £30.

What do you do?

Scenarios

Scenario 3

Rosie keeps complaining to you about a sore back. In this conversation, you tell her you had a similar problem and you have some strong prescribed pain killers left. She asks if she could take them.

What do you do?

Scenarios

Scenario 4

You are a volunteer that assists delivery of a group. Mary has been coming to the group for a long-time. You find yourself becoming increasingly attracted to her and think that she feels the same way about you. She asks you out on a date.

What do you do?

Scenarios

Scenario 5

Mark is new to a group. He states at the end that he has lost his bus pass and doesn't know how he will get home. You have driven to the group.

What do you do?

Scenarios

Scenario 6

You are a volunteer in a befriending role. Your role requires you to call a service user on a Tuesday & Thursday at 3pm-3.30pm. You are speaking to Bob who is an elderly person who is socially isolated. After 3 months, and building up a good rapport with Bob, he asks you if you could make another call. What do you do?

Scenarios

Scenario 7

Joy is a hospice volunteer, supporting patients and their families. She has developed a close relationship with a family who's Grandma is receiving end of life care. One family member becomes upset during a visit and seeks comfort from Joy. Joy responds by saying 'don't worry, God is looking down on her, she will be looked after in heaven'.

Scenarios Summary

Share discussions from some of the scenarios.

Can boundaries move?

Yes – with agreement from a line manager. Transparency is key. The role is then amended/updated.

What to take away from today

Thinking about scenarios we've discussed – always ask yourself the question...

“Is what I’m doing/about to do within my role?”

If the answer is NO, then you will be crossing a boundary.

Boundaries can move – but this has to be discussed and agreed with your line manager in a fully transparent way.

Any Questions?



Useful Resources

CVS Cheshire East – Downloadable resources

<https://www.cvsce.org.uk/gripp-downloadable-resources>

Royal Voluntary Service – Maintaining Positive Boundaries
Leaflet

NCVO

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/>

Training Evaluation

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JBYVPHN>

Please can you take 5 minutes to complete now 😊

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