# Personal and Professional Boundaries

#### Presented by Lena Sheffield, LMHC, CAP, MAC, CEDS



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# Webinar Presenter

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The Counseling Group of Miami 2840 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Miami, Florida 33129

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### Webinar Learning Objectives



#### LO #1

Identify appropriate boundaries, boundary crossings and boundary violations in the work setting.



#### LO #2

Identify vulnerabilities for blurry or unhealthy boundaries.



#### LO #3

Identify tips for setting healthy and appropriate boundaries in work setting.



# **Boundaries**



and sense of self go hand in hand

- protect us from unsafe spaces
- separate what is our business and what isn't our business





## **Boundaries**

help define who we are





### **Body's natural boundary system**

Our autonomic nervous system and minds scan to protect us Our immune system detects something foreign and fights Our digestive system detects imbalances and reacts Our senses react when something is unwanted









#### **Professional Boundaries in Addiction Tx**

The limits of a *fiduciary* relationship in which one person entrusts his or her welfare to another (Montgomery, 2012).



# **Professional Boundaries in treatment setting**

- therapeutic relationships require trust and safety
- client enters treatment anxious and vulnerable
- an implicit power differential
- professional is *responsible* for providing core conditions of safety and trust
- treatment providers have the *obligation* to establish and maintain consistent and clear boundaries
- boundaries are our "therapeutic frame"
- boundaries are determined by our role, context, practice and contract.



# Appropriate? Professional boundaries in tx setting

client factors (culture, age, gender, hx, personality, current physical and emotional state, etc)

> treatment role setting and context treatment practice contract









"And now, sadly for both of us, I have to invade your personal space."

















#### Context

setting and context (treatment center, office, rural, metropolitan, university, military, public or private location, etc)





#### **Practice**

Actual description of your practice. Professional scope SECOND EDITION

DBT Skills Training

Handouts and

Worksheets

MARSHA M. LINEHAN

Competencies



### Contract

What is the agreement and implied boundaries? Agreed upon treatment goals and treatment plan Verbally describing confidentiality Informed consent

> Maine Board of Licensure reports that 1/3 of the cases it investigates include allegations of failure to obtain adequate and meaningful informed consent (Nyberg, 2013, p. 20)



# **Informed Consent**

- a. explicit explanation as to the nature of all services to be provided and methodologies and theories typically utilized,
- b. purposes, goals, techniques, procedures, limitations, potential risks, and benefits of services,
- c. the addiction professional's qualifications, credentials, relevant experience, and approach to counseling,
- d. right to confidentiality and explanation of its limits including duty to warn,
- e. policies regarding continuation of services upon the incapacitation or death of the counselor,
- f. the role of technology, including **boundaries around electronic transmissions with clients and social networking**,
- g. implications of diagnosis and the intended use of tests and reports,
- h. fees and billing, nonpayment, policies for collecting nonpayment,
- i. specifics about clinical supervision and consultation,
- j. their right to refuse services, and
- k. their right to refuse to be treated by a person-in-training, without fear of retribution.
- NAADAC Code of Ethics I-3, 2016



## **Boundary Crossings**

outside common practice often benign and not **harmful or exploitive** isolated event non-progressive can be explained, talked about, documented can be learning opportunity or therapeutic



# **Boundary Violation**

- harmful (to the client, family, colleagues, industry, society)
- when someone trespasses on the other personhood, crosses the line
- tries to control the feelings, attitudes, behaviors, choices and values of the other
- power differential & exploitative
- judgment is based on harm to the client



# Polling Question #1



Have you had to defend your profession because of behaviors of a colleague in the industry?

Yes or No

Acceptable



# **Risk of Exploitation**

- They exist
- Identify upfront before engaging in professional relationship
  - simultaneous relationship



Appropriate

**Risk of Exploitation** 

- They exist
- Identify upfront before engaging in professional relationship
  - same time
  - earlier time
  - in future
- Selling or buying from clients (family)?
- Additional payments ?
- Relationships outside of work setting ?
- Assess the risk from the perspective of the client, not the professional (Gottlieb, 1993)



- Addiction Professionals shall make every effort to <u>avoid multiple relationships with a</u> <u>client.</u> When a dual relationship is unavoidable, the professional *shall take extra care* so that professional judgment is not impaired and there is no risk of <u>client exploitation</u>.
- Such relationships include, but are not limited to, members of the Provider's immediate or extended family, business associates of the professional, or individuals who have a close personal relationship with the professional or the professional's family.
- When extending these boundaries, Providers take appropriate professional precautions such as informed consent, consultation, supervision, and documentation to <u>ensure</u> that their judgment is not impaired and <u>no harm occurs</u>.
- Consultation and supervision shall be documented.

NAADAC Code of Ethics I-11, 2016



Acceptable

**Risk of Exploitation** 

- They exist
- Identify upfront before engaging in professional relationship
  - simultaneous relationship
  - prior relationship

Addiction Professionals recognize that there are inherent risks and benefits to accepting as a client someone with whom they have a prior relationship. This includes anyone with whom the Provider had a casual, distant, or past relationship. Prior to engaging in a counseling relationship with a person from a previous relationship, the Provider *shall seek consultation or supervision.* The burden is on the Provider to ensure that their judgment is not impaired and that exploitation is not occurring.

NAADAC Code of Ethics I-12, 2016



# Polling Question #2



Typically I have known professional boundary violations to be:

a. Turned into a bigger deal than need to beb. Covered up or overlookedc. Usually addressed appropriately

# **Social Media**



High risk for exploiting clients, family, colleagues and industry

High risk for self-indulgence and self promotion

Marketing and sales people do not follow the ethical and legal standards of the addiction counseling/ treatment industry

Educate them

Set standards up front

You are responsible for confidentiality on your page. HIPAA applies.

Discourage and educate clients about posting on line.

They should NOT do your marketing



# **Social Media**



- Set up separate professional and personal pages with strict privacy settings.
- Set up your rules about who and what content you will allow on your profile.
- Once clients come on your page and give input your responsibility is implied.
- Do you want to allow clients to know about each other online?
- Include your online policies in your Informed Consent.









- Set up rules for yourself about "friending" or "connecting" with colleagues.
- Be mindful about promoting others...
- Be mindful about sharing posts...
- Be mindful about liking or retweeting content.....

#### it reflects on you, your organization and our profession









I KEEP MY BOUNDARIES LOW AND FLIMSY. OTHERWISE I FIND THEM JUST TOD MUCH WORK TO ENFORCE. When you're tired of people standing too close to you



## **Personal Boundaries**

Blurry boundaries that give others the message it's ok to violate your boundaries.

- 1) Being too responsible for others 'better if I do it myself' can lead to burn out.
- 2 Too much empathy taking on moods and feelings of others makes it difficult to see yourself as separate and distinct from others. Are you making excuses for them?
- ③ Pleasing, victim role, sacrificing, often leads to resentment and more invalidation.
- (4) Saying yes, always volunteering, feeling obligated to say yes, often leads to passive aggressiveness and lack of validation.
- 5 Not expressing your wants, preferences, needs.
- 6 Overstepping others boundaries.


### **Personal Boundaries**

Where do you tend to take over?

Take responsibility for others?

Volunteer because it's expected?

Forfeit to be nice

### What if you didn't?



### **Checking your boundaries**

What things that they ask of you, do you want to say No to?

How have you felt when you set appropriate boundaries?

Who are the people in your life you want to learn to say No to?

What might happen if you set more appropriate boundaries?

What are some things you would like to be less passive about?



### Characteristics that may be a personal boundary violation

- Tries to instill guilt in you
- Name calling
- Yelling at you
- Sarcasm
- Dismissive or disregards your thoughts, beliefs, feelings or value
- Treats you inferior
- Takes over conversation
- Mocks or sets you up for ridicule
  or failure
- Excessive teasing

- Condescending
- Breaks confidences
- Often breaks promises
- Demanding
- Withholding
- Threatens with ultimatums or gestures
- Physically assaultive
- Sexually assaultive
- Makes up lies about you
- Exploits your vulnerabilities



### **Vulnerabilities**

- Illness or physical challenges
- Issues that interfere with your competency
- Relationship struggles
- Life crisis
- Financial difficulties
- Major decisions or transitions
- Professional insecurities or overzealousness
- Loneliness, lack of social network
- Not working on behavioral health issues



### Warning Signs

- specialness, enjoying time with client, thinking you are very special to the client
- making recommendations outside the scope of your profession
- increased socializing during and after sessions
- making more exceptions for one client over another
- · favors outside of treatment plan, providing or requesting
- enabling, wishing you could rescue
- enjoying being needed by them
- being attracted and being more attentive to your appearance
- strong negative emotions when they do not comply







# Are you too desperate in your current life to sell your integrity and ethics for money?

### "My ethics are not for sale"

SOURCE: SUMMITBUSINESS MAGAZINE. NET. VOL.09 ISSUE 05 October 2016





### **Mindfulness Practice**

"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally." Jon Kabat-Zinn



### MINDFULNESS PRACTICE HAS MULTITUDE OF EFFECTS OF COGNITIVE FUNCTION



Best response based on context



### **Restoring Harmony to your lifestyle**

Balance doesn't mean doing everything.

Examine your priorities and set boundaries.

Be firm in what you can and cannot do.

Follow expected behaviors for your industry, work setting and personal values



### **Self Care**

- Manage your schedule (realistically)
- Simplify your paper work/ email correspondence
- Communicate clearer up front
- Nurture yourself according to your likes and abilities and accessibilities
- Set aside time for play and physical activities
- Protect your time off
- Sleep 7-9 hours per night
- Eating variety and intuitively
- Bolster your support system

Poletto, 2009



### **Support System**

- Professionals with similar ethical standards
- Friends and family who respect the integrity of your work
- · Non-work network that stimulate your mind outside the field
- Supervisor/ mentors
- Access to ethical / legal resources
  - NAADAC
  - State credentialing agency
  - Risk Management
  - Malpractice liability carrier
  - Professional health program for your state (professional EAP for your credentials)
- Professional Code of Ethics and state statutes for your credentials.
- Who else?



### Polling Question #3



Do you feel comfortable going to your supervisor or professional colleague to discuss possible dilemmas regarding boundary issues with clients?

Yes or No

## Try to be a good role model for clients and the treatment field.



## Thank You!

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#### July 12, 2017

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