

Professional Boundaries Worksheet

(Adapted from “How tight (or loose) are your professional boundaries?” Published September 10, 2009 edition of Community Care Magazine)

Directions:

Read each case and choose the best answer and be prepared to explain why you chose the answer you did.

1. You are walking down the street with your partner and see a client you are currently working with walking towards you.

You:

- a) Ignore him/her.
- b) Make eye contact and see what he/she will do next (taking your cue from them).
- c) Nod a brief hello to him/her.
- d) Stop and chat with him/her.
- e) Stop and introduce your partner to him/her.
- f) Other:

2. Your work mobile phone is broken and one of your client needs to be able to contact you about the outcome of a custody case on a day that you are working outside of the office.

You:

- a) Give him/her your personal number but tell them it is a one-off and not to use it again.
- b) Give him/her your personal number but tell them it is a new work number.
- c) Tell him/her to call the office and leave a message.
- d) Say your phone is broken and blame lack of resources.
- e) Other:

3. One of your clients notices you reading a book that they are interested in. You have just finished the book and can tell they would love to read it.

You:

- a) Give him/her the book.
- b) Quickly put the book away.
- c) Discuss the ideas and themes of the book with him/her.
- d) Suggest they join the local library.
- e) Offer to lend him/her the book.
- f) Other:

4. A client asks you if you are married and if you have children.

You:

- a) Tell him/her the truth.
- b) Tell him/her it's not an appropriate question as you are there to focus on them.
- c) Acknowledge your situation without giving away too much information.
- d) Get out your family photos and describe your family in detail.
- e) Complain about not having a partner.
- f) Other:

5. A client you have been working with stops engaging with you and rejects your attempts to support them.

You feel:

- a) Sad
- b) Annoyed
- c) Disappointed
- d) Angry
- e) Not bothered
- f) Other:

6. A client tells you that you really “get” them, that no-one else understands them, and that they think you are a wonderful person.

You:

- a) Thank him/her and say that they are special too.
- b) Act pleased but modest.
- c) Explain that you are just doing your job.
- d) Tell him/her that those kinds of compliments are not appropriate.
- e) Give him/her a hug.
- f) Other:

7. You are working with an older client who is unable to leave the house. They ask you if you can pick up some milk and eggs for them on your way to their house.

You:

- a) Do him/her the favor and tell them it is just this once.
- b) Say you are not able to go for him/her.
- c) Tell him/her it's easy for you to stop on your way and you can do it whenever you go to their home.
- d) Ask your supervisor if it's ok.
- e) Don't do it but arrange for a service or another resource to do it in the future.
- f) Other:

8. You are working with a client who is flirting with you and tells you that you are beautiful or handsome.

You:

- a) Speak to your manager about the situation.
- b) Say thank you and move along with business, hoping he/she won't say it again.
- c) Tell them that your relationship is a professional one and they should not say those things.
- d) Get them referred to someone else.
- e) Other:

9. A new client gives you a hug at the end of a session.

You:

- a) Hug them back
- b) Let him/her hug you but don't really hug back.
- c) Avoid the hug and tell him/her that it is inappropriate.
- d) Accept the hug and tell him/her it is not appropriate.
- e) Other:

10. One of the clients you have been working with for a long time invites you to a 4th of July celebration with their family.

You:

- a) Attend, just this once.
- b) Decline the offer and tell him/her that it is not appropriate for you to attend.
- c) Tell him/her that you would love to attend but professional boundaries mean that you can't.
- d) Say you will try and then don't show up.
- e) Other:

11. One of your clients brings you a knitted winter hat she made to thank you for all that you have done for her.

You:

- a) Accept the gift.
- b) Refuse the gift and tell her that it is inappropriate.
- c) Accept the gift but tell her that she should not give you anything again.
- d) Accept the gift, document it, and report it to your manager.
- e) Other: