

Professional Boundaries Some Agencies Have Found Helpful

SUBJECT: CLIENT/STAFF BOUNDARIES & ETHICAL GUIDELINES

POLICY: It is the policy of NAME OF AGENCY that client/staff relationships shall remain professional at all times in order to prevent putting staff in any compromising positions in relation to clients.

PROCEDURE: Following are the procedures to be followed in order to preserve a professional relationship between clients and all staff.

1. Staff members should not discuss their private lives or personal beliefs with clients.
2. Staff members should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation.
3. Staff members must not engage in sexual behavior with clients or client's family members.
4. As a general principle, staff members should not provide transportation for clients or accept transportation from clients. In the event transportation is not available, consult your supervisor. Staffs are expected to have their own transportation and should not accept transportation from clients. In the event of an emergency, consult your supervisor.
5. Staff members should not socialize with clients outside the agency intervention, i.e. going to breakfast, lunch, movies, picnics, parties or, AA/NA functions. Client/Counselor relationship takes precedence even when the client is also a staff member.
6. Staff members who have existing or previous relationships with a client or with a client's significant other, wife, husband, or family member, should inform their supervisor and discuss the appropriateness of working with that person.
7. Staff members should not invite clients to their homes, nor share their personal addresses or phone numbers with clients.
8. Staff members should not accept keys to client's apartments, hold money for clients, hold medications for clients, or hold client's belongings.
9. Staff members should not acknowledge a client in a public setting unless the client has given him permission to do so.
10. Staff members should not loan money or borrow money from clients, nor purchase items or services for clients or from clients.
11. Supervisors need to be informed if a counselor plans to attend a client's wedding or funeral.
12. Staff members should not engage in business ventures with clients.
13. Staff members should not hire clients for personal business or accept labor or services from clients.
14. Counselors may have an outing with their groups with permission from their supervisors.
15. Staff members who attend 12-step meetings are advised to go to meetings where they are not likely to meet clients. Attending a meeting where you can be free to drop your counselor stance or your care manager stance is likely to be of greater benefit to you as a recovering person.
16. Home visits must have a therapeutic purpose.

COMPREHENSIVE RISK COUNSELING & SERVICES

17. Staff members should be cautious about accepting gifts from clients. Token gifts on special occasions are acceptable. If a gift is elaborate or expensive, decline politely. NEVER ACCEPT MONEY.
18. Staff members are permitted to give hugs to clients. Please remember:
 - A. Not all clients are comfortable with hugs
 - B. Hugs should be brief, non-demanding with no touching of any sensitive body parts
 - C. Pats on the back or shoulder are also supportive and encouraging.
19. Behaviors related to comforting bed-ridden clients or dying clients, which may involve prolonged holding, touching, hand or foot massage should be discussed with your supervisor. In general, the counselor or case manager may respond to the dying client's needs with care, compassion, and respect for the dignity and comfort of the client.
20. Immediate action will be taken through appropriate channels against unethical conduct by any member of the team.

Approved by: _____

Effective Date: ____/____/20____