



PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Professional Boundaries are integral to maintaining professional standards of practice and are essential guidelines that delineate the appropriate limits and behaviours within workers roles. These boundaries ensure the maintenance of a safe and respectful environment for both people accessing services and workers. They encompass maintaining confidentiality, establishing clear roles and responsibilities, and upholding ethical standards. It is imperative for workers to maintain a balance between empathy and objectivity, avoiding dual relationships or conflicts of interest that may compromise the quality of care provided. By adhering to these boundaries, workers can establish trust, promote autonomy, and foster positive relationships with people, ultimately facilitating effective support and assistance within the community,

WHY ARE PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES IMPORTANT

Professional boundaries are crucial in the sector for many reasons. Professional boundaries safeguard the well-being and dignity of people by ensuring that interactions remain respectful, appropriate, and focused on a person's needs. Maintaining boundaries also helps establish trust between the worker and the person seeking support, fostering a safe environment for disclosure and collaboration. Additionally, clear boundaries help prevent potential conflicts of interest, exploitation, or harm to both clients and workers.

If professional boundaries are not upheld, several risks can arise. One significant risk is the erosion of trust between the worker and the person seeking support, which can lead to reluctance in seeking assistance or disclosing sensitive information. Blurred boundaries may also result in situations where the worker's personal needs or interests supersede the person's welfare, compromising the quality of care provided. Furthermore, violating professional boundaries can lead to ethical dilemmas, legal consequences, damage to one's professional reputation, and even harm to the person seeking support's emotional or physical well-being. Overall, maintaining professional boundaries is essential for preserving the integrity of the person-worker relationship and ensuring the effectiveness and ethical practice of crucial services.

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Professional Boundaries are crucial to work in the sector and everyone needs to that the following codes of practice are being maintained in order to deliver quality services:

- Upholding privacy in interactions with individuals is a paramount commitment, ensuring confidentiality and respect are always maintained.
- Workers have an obligation to treat people with dignity and to safeguard, promote, and acknowledge a person's capacity for self-determination and to plan for their own needs.
- Always ensure to maintain a friendly and supportive approach with someone whilst maintaining a professional relationship that does not cross over into a personal relationship or friendship (real or perceived).
- Recognising where there is a conflict of interest or dual relationship when working with someone, where there could be ethical dilemmas that arise in practice. Using Supervision to openly discuss such instances and implement strategies to reduce or eliminate any risks or concerns.
- Recognising and being self-aware of the automatic power imbalance in the professional-person relationship and ensuring that the person/s feel safe, comfortable and able to make self-determined decisions.
- Critical reflection to occur on personal beliefs and values that influence practice and identify those that might impact on the rights of others or inform practice approaches that contradict the human rights and beliefs systems of the person they are working with.
- Workers are expected to always behave ethically and professionally, and any behaviour that is deemed unprofessional or unethical to be addressed with a supervisor.
- The worker will acknowledge, uphold, and protect the rights and legal protections of others in all instances of work practice.
- Knowing the limits to service delivery and ensuring that a person's needs are met elsewhere if required via active referrals and collaborative practices.
- Prioritising the delivery of support services, ensuring that the service and its staff possess the necessary knowledge and skills for proficient support delivery, whilst not providing services or information beyond the scope of one's role.
- Adhering to a duty of care is crucial, where services implement safe practices to safeguard the psychological and physical well-being of both individuals receiving support and the workers providing it. Workers are to report any concerns with work practices that they feel pose a risk to safety and seek guidance and support immediately via supervision or escalation processes.