

Professional Boundaries

Being professionally close whilst being personally distant

There are numerous definitions.

The professional boundary will be defined by the context and contract.

A boundary is the edge of appropriate behaviour at a given moment in the relationships between the professional and the patient.

It's really important to know about the boundary framework ...

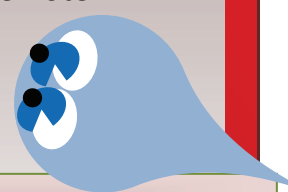
Boundary Crossing— a departure from the usual expectations of the professional relationship within the specific context. May be unintentional, thoughtless, inadvertent behaviour which is harmless & non-exploitative. However *intent* is relevant—when the behaviour is for the benefit of the professional and not the patient heading into the slippery slope of boundary violation.

Boundary Violation is a boundary crossing that takes the 'professional' out of professional role where the behaviour is exploitative and can harm the patient (having a social, financial, sexual relationship with the patient)

Sexual Misconduct covers a range of inappropriate professional behaviours including sexualised behaviour, sexual exploitation or abuse, entering into a sexual relationship, and sexual assault. Criminal offences will be investigated by the police.



- There are **Four Categories of Concern** to consider when exploring the boundary framework
- Therapeutic / Professional Relationship
 - Dual / Multiple relationships (especially in a rural and remote community)
 - Access to / disclosing information
 - Giving and receiving gifts, services, finances



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NB: It is important to familiarise with and understand the Professional Boundary Policy and Guidelines of your workplace and your Regulation Board requirements. NB: The word 'patient' is used in different contexts—the terms 'customer', 'client' or 'resident' may also be used.