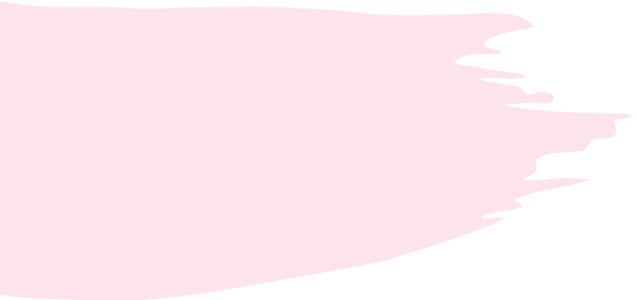


Choose the Lesser Suck

Navigating Interpersonal
& Professional Boundaries

Tina Stern, LCSW, OSW-C





Take A Moment

Think of 2 or 3 ways that your role has affected you

How has your view of being in this profession changed?

What does it currently feel like in your role?

Let's Talk About Boundaries

Talking about boundaries can be uncomfortable. Setting them can be even more uncomfortable. What about the aftermath of not setting boundaries?

Setting Boundaries



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Lack of Setting Boundaries



Interpersonal & Professional Boundaries

Interpersonal Boundaries

- ❑ Are the physical, emotional and mental limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships
- ❑ They allow professionals to maintain psychological safety for themselves and their patients
- ❑ make objective decisions to most effectively assist clients to achieve their goals by supporting or empowering them

Interpersonal & Professional Boundaries

Professional Boundaries

- ❑ are the legal, ethical and organizational frameworks that protect both patient's and employees, or workers, from physical and emotional harm, and help to maintain a safe working environment (www.rav.org.au)
- ❑ Being friendly, not friends
- ❑ Ability to know where you end and the client begins
- ❑ A clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your role as a service provider

A CONTINUUM OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR



Every nurse–patient relationship can be plotted on the continuum of professional behavior illustrated above.

www.ncbon.com

Being either under involved or over involved with a client jeopardizes the nursing professional's ability to provide safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care (Go, 2018).

- ❑ Under-involvement: Disinterested, disengaged.
- ❑ Therapeutic Relationship: maintain professional boundaries
- ❑ Over-Involvement: sharing too much personal information, only person who can care for patient

So Now What?



Why can setting & maintaining boundaries be so difficult?

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- ❑ *Dual Relationships*- The service provider & patient know each other in a personal context from another setting.
- ❑ *Values Conflict*- The patient's choices, history, relationships, feelings, lifestyle and/or life circumstances conflict with the service provider's values and/or knowledge about best practices. We need to be mindful to not impose our own value system on our patients and this can happen subconsciously.
- ❑ *Fraction in Teamwork*- The service provider does not trust that other team members are fulfilling their responsibilities to the patient, believes that they can provide their services better than other staff can, and/or believes that the patient works best only with them. The service provider takes over the roles of the other team members.
 - ❑ Sometimes we tell ourselves, "it's easier to just get the job done myself because I already know how to do it. We have an opportunity to learn the language around empowering our coworkers to do the task that they are fully capable of doing. I no longer want to be a barrier to another person's growth opportunity

Why can setting & maintaining boundaries be so difficult?

- ❑ Saying “no” doesn’t feel good and we often want to take care of others feelings.
- ❑ This is hard stuff to navigate especially when we come from a place of “caring.” Sometimes boundary issues come up because it is not about providing good care for the patient or doing what’s in the best interest of the patient but rather filling our own internal or unmet need.
- ❑ Sometimes, we believe if a patient does not take advantage of the resources we provide or they do not follow through with recommendations then it is a direct reflection of how “good” we are at our job and providing the “best patient care” possible.

Why Setting Boundaries is Important

- ❑ It models healthy communication & professional relationships
- ❑ Helps healthcare workers not fall into the role of "rescuer"
- ❑ Empowers patients/coworkers and supports autonomy
- ❑ Helps mitigate compassion fatigue and burnout
- ❑ Increases staff resilience
- ❑ Helps maintain focus on our responsibility to the patient and coworkers
- ❑ Helps prevent potential "splitting" on teams.
- ❑ Improves and opens communication with team members
- ❑ Maintain physical, emotional and psychological safety.

Signs Boundary Issues May Be Present

- You and your patient start referring to each other as friends.
- You accept or send a "friend" request on social media.
- Patient offers you gifts or you provide the patient with gifts.
- Patient is asking about significant personal information or staff discloses excessive personal information to the patient.
- Staff feels anxiety related to the situation and unable to leave work at work.
- Staff offer assistance outside of role (providing patient with transportation, money, childcare, new pet etc).

Choosing the Lesser Suck with Boundaries



Setting Boundaries

- Uncomfortable feeling
- Navigating pushback
- Improve communication and empowering of others
- Our needs are met
- Less resentment
- Builds resiliency



Lack of Setting Boundaries

- Compassion fatigue
- Discord with team members
- May cause patient harm
- Operating out of scope of practice
- Ethical dilemmas

Dr. George Everly's Burnout Club

Do you really want to be a "Member"?

- Be a "perfectionist"; never accept anything less than perfection.
- Work at least TEN hours a day; work as many holidays as possible.
- Adhere to a diet of "fast foods" and candy bars.
- Adhere to inflexible idealism.
- Assume the responsibility for solving the problems of ALL your friends, family and co-workers.
- Never delegate any responsibility.
- Never say "NO"—try to please all of the people all of the time.
- Never waste time relaxing.
- Never exercise.
- Never take any time off for yourself; if you are ever forced to do so, feel as guilty as possible about it.
- You must remember that everyone else comes first—your needs come last.
- Above ALL, get emotionally involved in everything you do. Learn to empathize in all aspects of your life.

"I will remember that knowing my boundaries does not mean forcing others to change; it means that I know my own limits and take care of myself by respecting them."

-anonymous

Thank you

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