

TITLE: PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Professional boundaries between staff and the service user underpin all areas of practice in social care, and the mismanagement of these boundaries can lead to unprofessional conduct and negative consequences for both members of staff and the service user.
- 1.2 Staff who breach professional boundaries can cause significant harm and distress to service users. Furthermore, professional boundaries are a subject that causes confusion and concern for some staff, and there is an absence of clarification and resources for them to draw upon. This policy is designed to provide such a resource.

2.0 Policy

- 2.1 To ensure that the highest standard of caring services is provided by staff to service users, who are required to establish a good rapport, whilst maintaining a professional and emotional distance.

3.0 Core Boundaries

- 3.1 Staff should make the care of service users their first concern, treating them as individuals whilst respecting their privacy and dignity. To this end staff should:
 - Treat each service user as individual and respect their privacy and dignity.
 - Be polite, kind, caring and compassionate.
 - Not discriminate in any way against those for whom they provide care.
 - Recognise diversity and respect cultural differences, values and beliefs of others, including those who they provide care for and other members of staff.
 - Respect a service users' right to confidentiality.
 - Not disclose information to anyone who is not entitled to it.
 - Follow the policy on confidentiality.
 - Listen to service users and respond to their concerns and preferences.
 - Support service users to care for themselves to improve and maintain their health.
 - Provide information and advice in a way service users can understand, so they can make choices and decisions about their care.
 - Work in partnership with service users, their families and carers.
 - Always gain consent before they begin to provide care.
 - Refuse any gifts, favours or hospitality that may be interpreted as an attempt to gain preferential treatment.
 - Maintain clear sexual boundaries at all times with the people for whom you provide care, their families and carers.

4.0 Working with others

- 4.1 Staff should work with others to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in their care, their families and carers, and the wider community.
- 4.2 Staff should be aware of the roles and responsibilities of other people involved in providing health and social care.
- 4.3 Staff should work co-operatively within teams and respect the skills, expertise and contributions of others.
- 4.4 Staff should accept their duty of care and inform the manager if they believe a colleague or anyone else may be putting someone at risk of harm.

5.0 Staff provide a high standard of practice and care at all times

- 5.1 Staff should always:
 - Recognise and stay within the limits of their competence.
 - Endeavour to provide care based on the best available evidence or best practice.
 - Follow the manager's record keeping guidance and ensure they follow their policy on recording, handling and storage of records.

6.0 Staff should be open and honest, act with integrity and uphold the reputation of their profession

- Be honest and trustworthy when completing records.
- Demonstrate a personal and professional commitment to equality and diversity.
- Inform your manager of any poor practice that you observe.

7.0 Unprofessional Behaviour

This may include -

- Breach of confidentiality.
- Failure to keep professional or sexual boundaries.
- Persistent rudeness to service users, colleagues or others.
- Abuse
- Not responding to requests for care from service users
- Limiting choice
- Unlawful discrimination.
- Misuse of the internet and social networking sites.

8.0 Social Networking

8.1 Staff should be aware of confidentiality issues when using social networking sites and take care not to cross professional boundaries. Staff must comply with the Social Media Policy.

9.0 Staff Training

9.1 The importance of maintaining professional boundaries should form part of the staff induction and staff training programme.