The Ethics of Touch: Boundaries - The Invisible Fence

with Cherie Sohnen-Moe & Dr. Ben Benjamin

Instructors:

Cherie Sohnen-Moe

Dr. Ben Benjamin
Webinar Goals

- Gain a shared understanding of boundaries and boundary violations

Logistics

- Time: 75 minutes
- Questions: If you have a question, please ask us on my Dr Benjamin Facebook page after the webinar so everyone can see the answer.
  - [www.Facebook.com/DrBenBenjamin](http://www.Facebook.com/DrBenBenjamin)
- Get a pen and paper please
- Two exercises from your print out
Pretest

1. Choose the FALSE statement:
   a. The power differential is decreased by meeting the client’s body language, energy, and positioning.
   b. The power differential is eliminated as long as the power differential isn’t taken advantage of.
   c. The power differential is increased by the client reclining on the examination/treatment table
   d. The power differential is increased by the therapist by leaning over the client

Pretest

2. A practitioner frequently tells clients about personal problems and usually runs over by about 20 minutes in each session. The practitioner has:
   a. Semipermeable boundaries
   b. Very rigid boundaries
   c. Too permeable boundaries
   d. Tried to meet the client at the boundary
3. Boundary violations occur because:
   a. of a lack of understanding of a client’s boundaries
   b. the practitioner is not in touch with his/her own boundaries
   c. the practitioner has permeable boundaries
   d. a and b

4. Which of the following statements best describes the power differential in the professional helping relationship?
   a. It lessens the feeling of responsibility the practitioner has of needing to know what the client needs
   b. It is important for the practitioner to understand because it deters boundary crossing issues
   c. It rarely influences boundary crossings or boundary violations between the client and practitioner
   d. It significantly reduces the chances of a boundary crossing or violation occurrence
Pretest

5. You tell a client that there is a 50% cancellation fee if s/he cancels an appointment with less than 24 hours notice. You have just:

   a. changed the boundary
   b. created a boundary
   c. told him/her not to cancel late
   d. all of the above

Pretest

6. Choose the FALSE statement:

   a. Boundaries need to be contextually appropriate
   b. Boundaries are innate, developed and learned
   c. Boundaries do not change when crossed or violated
   d. Boundary maintenance is always the responsibility of the practitioner
Understanding Boundaries

Boundary Clarification Exercise

Draw a line from each word to the bubble that best corresponds with that concept.

- Emotional
- Touch
- Energetic
- Clothing
- Intellectual
- Time
- Power Differences
- Lines That Separate
- Borders
- Space
- Power Differences
- Edges
- Place
- Dual Relationships
- Physical
- Intrapersonal
- Sexual
- Money
- Language
- Interpersonal
- Self-Disclosure
- Limits
- What are boundaries?
- How do we create, manage and change boundaries?
- What are the different types of boundaries?
Types of Boundaries

- Physical
- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Sexual
- Energetic

Relationship Boundaries

- Separate one person from another
- Protect Integrity
- Generally Unseen
- Ever-changing
- Attitudes
- Sensitivity
The Physical Boundary

The Emotional Boundary
The Intellectual Boundary

The Sexual Boundary
Boundary Models

Salvador Minuchin

Boundary Models

Fritz Perls
Personal Boundaries

Permeable

Semi-permeable

Rigid

Permeable
Personal Boundaries

Semi-permeable

Personal Boundaries

Rigid
Interactive Boundaries

Meeting at the Boundary

Boundary Crossing or Violation

Distance from the Boundary
Interactive Boundaries

Boundary Crossing or Violation

Distance from the Boundary
Boundary Indicator

Answer the following using:
Usually, Often, Occasionally, Seldom, Never

1. It is difficult for me to say “no” to people I am close to.
2. I feel my happiness depends on other people.
3. I am overly sensitive to other people’s feelings.
4. I would rather attend to others than to myself.
5. I have a hard time making decisions.
6. I trust others easily.
Answer the following using: Usually, Often, Occasionally, Seldom, Never

7. I feel anxious, scared or afraid.
8. I put more into relationships than I get out of them.
9. I spend my time and energy helping others so much that I often neglect my own needs and wants.
10. I tend to take on the moods of people close to me.
11. When I awake it takes me awhile to realize I am awake.

Boundary Indicator Results

Permeable
Usually
Often

Semi-permeable
Occasionally

Rigid
Seldom
Never
Boundary Change Agents

- Location of Service
- Interpersonal Space
- Appearance
- Self-Disclosure
- Language
- Touch
- Time
- Money

Boundary Change Agents
Therapeutic Relationships

Client Centered

Fiduciary Relationship

Structure

Roles

Power Differential

Safety

The Power Differential
The Power Differential
The Power Differential
In Health Care

The Practitioner’s Role
The Practitioner’s Role

Every action the practitioner takes is in the service of the client’s needs – not the practitioner’s needs.

The client has voice in the process and must agree to the course of treatment for it to proceed.

The client has the right to expect that the practitioner always acts in the client’s best interest.

The Client’s Role
Minimizing the Power Differential

1. Communicate Openly and Clearly
2. Honor Physical Boundaries

3. Get Clients Involved in Their Treatments
What are some other things you can do to reduce the Power Differential?

Boundary Crossings and Violations
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A boundary violation is a harmful transgression of a boundary.

A boundary crossing is a transgression that may or may not be experienced as harmful.

A boundary violation is a harmful transgression of a boundary.
Examples of Boundary Crossings and Violations

- Careless or Uninvited Words
- Inappropriate Touch
- Sexual Misconduct
- Inappropriate Self-Disclosure

Boundary Crossing, Violation or Not?

1. Hugging clients when they arrive.
2. Asking clients for financial advice
3. Dating a current client
4. Telling your spouse specific details about a client.
5. Telling your client about a personal problem.
6. Client asking how much money you make
7. Client arrives late and expects a full treatment
8. A client starts crying on the table and the therapist asks probing questions
Post Test

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