

Maintaining Boundaries with Families and Preserving Yourself

- ❖ **What are boundaries? Why setting boundaries is important?**
 - a. Boundaries are limits that protect the space between the professional's power and the client's vulnerability. It allows us to maintain objectivity. It empowers your families
- ❖ **Boundaries can be communicated through:**
 - a. Clear statements- State exactly what you can do and what you can't do, then stick to it!
 - b. Level of involvement- Are you spending more time with one family more than others on your caseload? Are you doing things for a family that they can do for themselves?
- ❖ **Boundary Violations:**
 - a. Secrets- When you listen to and agree, overtly or covertly, not to disclose something to another family member or your agency you create an alliance and remove yourself from a neutral position.
 - b. Self-disclosure- Use caution not to share too much of your personal life and be sure that what you're sharing has a positive message.
 - c. Reversal of roles- When you talk more about your life and your issues, interfering with the focus on the mother and baby. This can happen over time and as we get more comfortable.
 - d. Overindulging families- It is tempting and happens often that we do too much for one or all of our parents.
- ❖ **Friendships versus Professional Relationships**
 - In a friendship:
 - a. Behavior can be spontaneous
 - b. Communication could be judgmental
 - c. Feelings, fondness, anger, love can be expressed
 - In a professional relationship:
 - d. The professional is "responsible" for the relationship
 - e. It has a specific purpose and it is goal directed
 - f. Focus is on the needs of the participant
 - g. There is a professional code of conduct in place
- ❖ **Strength Based Approaches**
 - a. Major focus on parent strengths and capacities as opposed to their deficits
 - b. Worker support families in reaching goals families have identified
- ❖ **Burnout**
 - a. Burnout is a state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. This can occur as a result of repeated boundary related issues.
 - b. Signs of burnout: powerlessness; hopelessness; emotional exhaustion; detachment; isolation; irritability; frustration
- ❖ **Ways to Self-Preserve**
 - a. Give yourself a break when you allow a boundary to be crossed – we all make mistakes
 - b. Build or maintain a good foundation of physical health: eat right, get enough sleep, and exercise daily.
 - c. Acknowledge your own needs and seek to get them met.
 - d. Know your limits with your work and stick to them!
 - e. Manage your time (create priority lists, schedule time to do paperwork and catch up every day)
 - f. Take time off
 - g. Work with your supervisor on ways to prevent or correct boundary issues

