

Boundaries and Professional Relationships

Presented by:

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Welcome and Introductions

- Let's get to know each other....
- Please identify yourself and your roles at DMU.
- Who are we:
 - Deborah Haliczer
 - Toni Tollerud



Learning Outcomes for Today's Workshop

- 1. Define boundary issues in a professional setting
- 2. Discuss dual relationships, overlapping relationships, and ethical dilemmas that arise
- 3. Articulate the impact of problematic boundaries on students, colleagues, and the school
- 4. Raise awareness around guidelines and strategies for resolving boundary issues and ethical concerns
- 5. Identify strategies for modeling healthy boundaries
- 6. Discuss and practice common (and not-so common) boundary dilemmas

Professional Boundaries in the Medical Profession

- Boundaries are limits that allow for the establishment of a safe and clear connection between two people (generally one with more power) so that the learner's needs can be met.
 - Helps to define the relationship by setting limits and clarifying roles
 - Establishes trust
 - Fosters a learning environment
 - Allows for professional growth and development for the student
 - Serves as a good role model
- **Creates a TRUST-BASED Relationship**



Boundary violations

- When the limits of a professional boundary are altered or crossed, it distorts the relationship
 - Ambiguous
 - Allows intrusion into space that was considered safe
 - Erodes the trust
 - Causes pain and or confusion
 - Pain and confusion may be immediate or delayed
 - Students become more vulnerable
 - Supervisor or teacher experiences vulnerability as well
 - Alters perceptions regarding how others think of us or the program

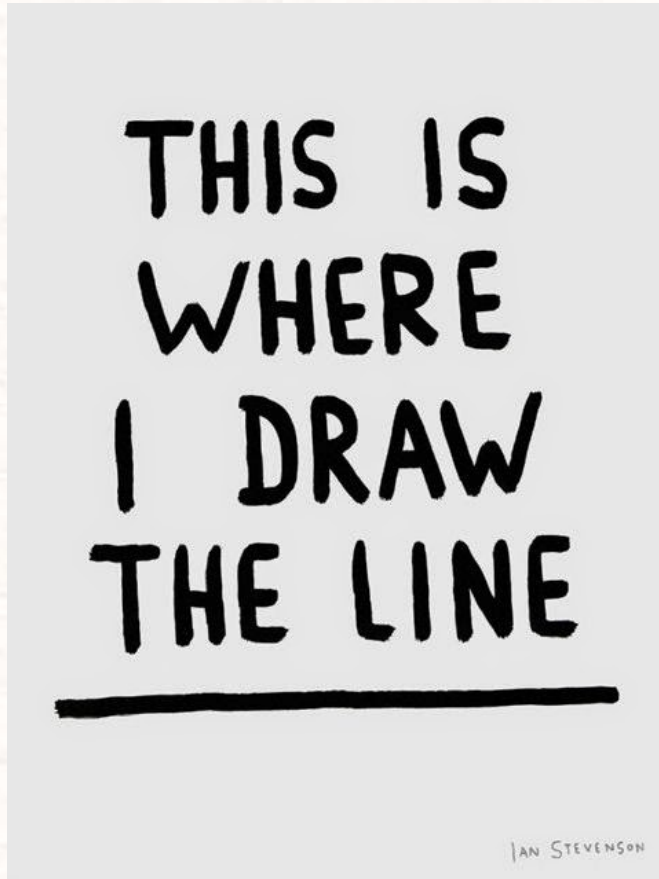
Types of Boundary Violations

- Dual Relationships (a professional and personal relationship takes place at the same time)
- Overlapping relationships (a person has several professional relationships with a student at the same time, i.e., supervisor and teacher and research advisor)
- Mistreatment (belittling a student, harassment, discrimination)
- Favoritism (showing favor to some students over others)
- Inappropriate or excessive closeness (acting inappropriately on feelings of attraction, giving sexual favors)

The KEY Word is BALANCE

- Mentor and good role model
- Socialize into the profession
- Address student individual needs to the best we can
- Feeling emotions with and from our students
- Develop close and meaningful relationships of caring and support over periods of time
- Evaluator and teacher
- Not share too much personal info about self or others
- Not show favoritism or address student needs excessively
- Maintaining objectivity and fairness
- Avoid getting lazy in the relationship and blurring the boundary lines based on time and familiarity

The Goal of Establishing Good Boundaries



- Critical to any teacher-student relationship is finding a **balance** between **closeness** that is necessary to provide good mentoring, and the necessary **distance** that allows the teacher to perform his or her function in an objective manner while not coercing the student into engaging in relationships that may be either academically or psychologically harmful.”

– (Plaut and Baker, 2011, p. 832)

Acknowledging Your Power

- **POWER: the ability to exert influence over others**
 - As teachers, supervisors, etc. we automatically have power
 - Students depend on us to impart to them skills, knowledge, judgement, and values so they give us power in these relationships
 - It impacts our students whether we want to or not

ACTIVITY: In your small groups discuss the following three points

1. Describe the various types of power you have in your roles with your students.
2. How comfortable are you acknowledging and talking about your power.
3. Review the different sources of power on the handout and talk about these.

Using Power With Awareness and Integrity

- Each time we exert our power we are taking a risk with the relationships we are cultivating with our students.

words
have
power



Impact of Boundary Issues on DMU

- ACTIVITY
- Break into small groups. Read over the list of common boundary issues that plague teacher/student relationships.
- Have any of these happened to you or to colleagues you know? Select the one you most would like to talk about in your small group. You will have 3-4 minutes to present this dilemma to your group, so each group will get a chance to discuss three scenarios. **Share as you feel comfortable.**
 - If you were faced with this dilemma, what do you think is the best way to resolve it?
 - What would you want to be aware of regarding the situation?
 - What issues would inform your decision?
 - What potential harm could come from not resolving this in a healthy manner?

Resolving Boundary Dilemmas



- Review of Issues to consider when facing a boundary situation
- A Model for Decision Making

Important Strategies to Consider

- Review the strategies on the Outline
- Consider new realities in the academic world

Let's TRY IT!

- How good are we at responding to a situation that may result in crossing a boundary?
- ACTIVITY ROLE PLAY:
 - Say to your supervisor: You know Dr. __, I have been working with you as a research assistant on this project for some time. Let's put it aside because I really want to tell you how I feel about you. I just can't control myself any more. I am romantically attracted to you and would like to kiss you. I know from how we laugh a lot you like me too! What do you think?
 - Hey Dr __, I really need to talk to someone about what's going on in my life at home. My husband(wife) just doesn't understand how much work it takes to be in grad school and all the sacrifices I have to make to get this degree. Consequently we are fighting a lot, I can't concentrate on my work and internship, and well, I been taking some pills just to get through the day. I know you understand cuz you've been here. I need you to really do some counseling with me and help me decide if I should get a divorce or what I should do? Can you help me?

Discussion Scenarios

- What would you do?
- Look over the list and as time permits, select a scenario that is interesting to you. Discuss how you would handle this with your group. Which scenarios are the most problematic for you and why?

Conclusion on Effective Strategies- Three Guidelines

- How to Maintain Ethical Boundaries and Relationships:
 - 1. Acknowledge the power and responsibility of the faculty role
 - **AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE**
 - 2. Develop a frame for evaluating faculty-student relationships
 - **MINDFULNESS: HAVE A MODEL FOR DECISION-MAKING**
 - 3. Foster and maintain a climate that supports ethical relationships with students
 - **BE CONSISTENT AND COURAGEOUS IN KEEPING THE ROLE**
- “Faculty are always “ON” no matter what the venue”

• Biaggio, Paget, and Chenworth (1997) p. 184.

Questions and Reflections

- Thank you for your participation today.
- What are you taking away from this workshop that was meaningful or helpful on your role as faculty?

Boundaries and
Professional
Relationships

“Ethics is knowing the
difference between
what you have a right
to do and what is right
to do”.

Potter Stewart
Supreme Court Justice
1958-1981

BOUNDARIES AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Toni Tollerud. Ph.D.

Deborah Haliczer, MSW, LCSW

- I. Introductions
 - A. Goal: Discuss effective ways to prevent, and resolve difficult professional relationship issues.
 - B. **Activity:** Briefly introduce yourself, and identify your multiple roles.
 - C. Learning outcomes:
 1. Define and discuss boundary issues that arise in this professional setting.
 2. Discuss “dual relationships”, “overlapping relationships” and ethical dilemmas that can arise.
 3. Help participants assess impact of problematic professional relationships on student learning outcomes.
 4. Identify guidelines and strategies for resolving ethical dilemmas and conflicts.
 5. Identify strategies for modeling ethical relationship skills for senior faculty, junior colleagues, and graduate students.

- II. Professional Boundaries and Ethics Issues in Medical Education.
 - A. Defining and discussing professional “boundaries”
 - B. Dual relationships, overlapping relationships and unethical relationships.
 - C. Power and Risk (**Activity:** “*Acknowledge your power*”. **Handout:** “*Different Sources of Power that Affect the Teacher-Student Relationship*”, [M. Weimer].)

- III. **Activity:** Discussion of Boundary Issues. (**Handout:** “*Boundary Issues for Discussion*”)

- IV. Boundaries and Professional Relationships: Issues to consider: (**Handout:** “*Boundaries and Professional Relationships: Issues to*

consider in teacher/ student relationships”; and “Model for Decision-Making”

- V. Strategies for Avoiding and Resolving Professional Boundary Issues
 - A. Using the syllabus to communicate and set the tone for boundaries in professional relationships.
 - B. Clear discussion of boundaries. Teach it. Incorporate it into your teaching.
 - C. Differences between supervision and consulting.
 - D. Patient rights and responsibilities.
 - E. Student rights and responsibilities.
 - F. Be mindful of the fact that you are a role model.
 - G. Faculty member/Supervisor rights and responsibilities.
 - H. Knowing your rules, policies, procedures and Codes of Professional Ethics and Conduct.
 - I. Consulting with colleagues. Organize dialogues on boundary issues as part of professional development.
 - J. Document your issues, concerns and actions.

- VI. New Realities in Academic Work Roles:
 - A. Title IX and risk. Know the rules. (campus and federal)
 - B. The realities of dual and multiple relationships: **Be mindful of risk.**
 - C. Be self-aware: know your own vulnerabilities.

- VII. *Discussion: Scenarios.* (Small group discussion.)

- VIII. Reflections and Conclusions.

Different Sources of Power that Affect the Teacher-Student Relationship

www.facultyfocus.com

Maryellen Weimer, PhD

Communication educators have taken a well-known typology of power and applied it to teachers. According to this theory-based schematic, individuals exert influence over other individuals based on five different sources of power.

Reward power—Students learn quickly that teachers can give them rewards such as bonus points, extra credit, or other forms of positive feedback. Students do what the teacher asks or tells them to do because they are motivated to get these rewards.

Coercive power—Students also learn that teachers can punish. There may be penalties for late papers or unexcused absence. In this case, students respond to the teacher's power because they want to avoid these kinds of punishments.

Legitimate power—Students expect teachers to have some authority over them. Teachers determine what students will study, what assignments they will complete, and what standards they must reach in order to pass and do well. If students accept these agreed-upon definitions of a teacher's role, they will acquiesce to the teacher's direction.

Referent power—Students do the teacher's bidding because students admire the teacher. Because students identify with the teacher and have positive regard for him or her, they willingly do as the teacher says.

Expert power—This power comes from the teacher's knowledge of content and/or expertise as an educator. Students are willing to do as the teacher says because they recognize that the teacher knows more than they do.

Teachers make moves based on these sources of power—they tell students how to solve a problem, or that points will be taken off if papers are late, and they respond with smiles, nods, and positive reactions to a student's answer. If students respond by following the teacher's direction their behaviors confirm their willingness to let the teacher influence them.

The application of these sources of power to the teacher-student relationship is well explained in this article: Schrod, P., Whitt, P.L., and Truman, P.D. (2007). Reconsidering the measurement of teacher power use in the college classroom. *Communication Education*, 56 (3), 308-332.

Excerpted from Sources of Power, *The Teaching Professor*, April 2008.

Boundaries and Professional Relationships

Deborah Haliczzer, MSW, LCSW

Toni Tollerud, Ph.D.

Issues to consider in teacher/ student boundaries

1. What are the laws, rules, policies and procedures that regulate your actions?
2. (*Remember, it is your responsibility to know what they are.*)
3. What is your primary role, and other roles, in the situation and how does this influence your actions and decisions? Reflect on your awareness of power.
4. What do relevant Codes of Ethics and Code of Conduct say about your actions and decisions? (Are there differences between your various Codes?)
5. If you are acting in multiple roles, which takes precedence in this situation?
6. Will your actions cause harm?
7. How will your actions affect your students, patients, and colleagues?
8. What behaviors and ethical principles are you modeling for your students?
9. How will your actions look in a court of law? Are they defensible?
10. How will your actions be perceived by your colleagues?
11. How would your mother, or family feel about and view your actions?
12. How will your actions look if published in a local paper? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, or a publication in your profession?
13. Have you discussed your actions with a trusted colleague or supervisor?

Model for Decision-Making:

1. What is the problem, ethical issue or situation?
2. Who is affected by the situation? Acknowledge your power and responsibility.
3. What are the facts?
4. Identify 3-5 viable options for action.
5. Use the considerations above to decide best course of action.
6. Decide on your actions. Make your decision and document reasons, justification, sources used to make the decision, colleagues consulted.
7. Consider discussing the dilemma and decision with a colleague or consultant.
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of your decision.
9. Maintain a climate that supports ethical decision-making.
10. Take personal responsibility.

**Adapted from NIU College Business: " Building Ethical Leaders"*

**See also, Frederick G. Reamer, Social Work Values and Ethics, 2nd. Ed.,*

BOUNDARY ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Where do faculty responsibilities end and begin if I encounter a very intoxicated student in the wild who may be jeopardizing DMU's reputation by showing obvious ties to DMU, such as wearing DMU apparel/name badge or by yelling "I'm a second-year med student at DMU!"? If they may become dangerous to themselves or others by choosing to do something like driving drunk or being very out of control, where are our liability risks if we try to stop them?
2. How do we have a life but still be faculty? Examples: online dating profile may include students in match results, going out to a bar on weekend and seeing students there, what if a student "friends" you on Facebook?
3. Professionalism definitions and cultural norms may be different in various fields represented at DMU. Examples include taking students to conferences and splitting hotel rooms to save money for students, not an unusual activity to go out for drinks with graduate program advisor, or acceptance for our appearance to be more casual or trendy. How do we determine what is acceptable within our respective fields?
4. What if a student "friends" you on Facebook? And what would you do if a friend posted inappropriate or sexual images on your Facebook page, which is accessible by your students?
5. What if a student asks you to call during the evening hours? Should you stay at work to call out on a university phone? Can I call on my personal cell phone?
6. If I provide advice or encouragement to a student, where do I record this if I am not their advisor? There are expectations for faculty to record student meetings, but how are we supposed to record other advice-giving?
7. When seeing pattern of bad behavior (e.g., treating staff poorly, belittling others) that will impact a student's career preparation or success at DMU, what should I do to document, or to discuss this with the student when I see the behavior as s/he's visiting my clinical office as a patient (outside of physician/patient interaction)? To what extent can I discuss/share it with other DMU personnel (such as advisor or professional integrity committee?)
8. If seeing students for mental health issues, should I recuse myself in academic roles, such as SIM or SPAL evaluator or course director? Are there special ways to address it? In what ways could I be more objective?
9. What should I do when I see faculty make themselves exceptionally available to emotionally needy students?

10. How should I, as a faculty member, respond to personal things students share with me?
Where should I draw the line?
11. What are the public expectations of faculty? (by administration, colleagues, students, other stakeholders, the public)
12. What about perceptions of favoritism and the impact on those involved? Others?
13. How can faculty protect themselves and limit their vulnerability?

(Tollerud and Haliczzer)

SCENARIOS

1. You overhear a colleague talking with a student about another student's performance.
2. Frustrated with some administrative actions, a professor uses class time to complain at length about the administration.
3. A professor is talking with a group of students and is overheard criticizing a colleague's medical skills.
4. A faculty/student event takes place, where alcohol is served. Some individuals imbibe to excess and inappropriate behavior occurs.
5. A faculty member requires students to "friend" him/her on Facebook as part of their class requirements. Some students express concern that the faculty member's other friends have posted some sexually explicit photos.

VIGNETTES *(from Plaut and Baker article; p. 832:)

6. "*Camping*: A physician who is teaching a student on a clinical rotation invites the student to go on a weekend camping trip with him and his family."
7. "*Cologne*: A medical student tells her attending physician how good his cologne smells."
8. "*Conference*: A faculty member shares a hotel room with a student at a conference that the student could not otherwise afford to attend."
9. "*Date*: A third-year medical student on an inpatient rotation is asked out by the chief resident."
10. "*Dinner*: Around the middle of a rotation, an attending physician asks a medical student to join the physician and the physician's family for dinner at his home. As they sit down, the physician asks the student to "give thanks."
11. "*Disclosure*: An attending physician tells one of his female fellows about the hormonal shifts of his wife in the first trimester of pregnancy, shying that she is not behaving normally or rationally."
12. "*Dog-sitting*: A clerkship faculty member asks a student to baby sit her dogs for the weekend while she is away at a conference."
13. "*Facebook*: A student invites a faculty member to be a friend on her Facebook page."

14. "*Golfing*: A clerkship director invites a couple of male med students on his current rotation to play golf with him on the weekend."
15. "*Insistent*: A male faculty member comes in after dinner to work in his office. A female student calls with questions about material that was covered in class earlier in the week. When the faculty member mentions that he is in his office working, the student says, "Great! I'll come right up."
16. "*Late lesson*: It is 5 o'clock and the office staff has just left for the day. The male faculty member asks his female student to stay to review patient records with him. After a short time, it becomes apparent to the student that chart review was not what he had in mind."
17. "*Ride*: A faculty member consistently gives a student a ride to a distant clinic where their joint preceptorship occurs."
18. "*Therapist*: A student has just finished her psychiatry rotation. On the rotation, the student has diagnosed herself as having ADHD, and social anxiety. She highly values her attending psychiatrist and wants him to be her therapist."

Plaut, S.M, and Baker, D. (2011). Teacher-student relationships in medical education: Boundary considerations. *Medical Teacher*. 33:828-833.