

The Clinic for Boundaries Studies

Maintaining Proper Boundaries: A 3 Day Course

Summary

This course is a group based programme which aims to help people in the caring professions improve their awareness of, and skills for, establishing and maintaining professional boundaries. It is based on similar courses in the USA.

Who is the program for?

The course is for health or care practitioners who have a particular need to improve their professional boundaries with patients or clients. It may be helpful to professionals who have concerns about boundary keeping, or are in the early stages of disciplinary or conduct hearings or other professional processes. Participants may have admitted or have been subject to a finding of fact in relation to boundary violations. Boundary issues may include sexual boundary issues or other boundary matters, such as other forms of improper relationships with patients, dual relationships, excessive self-disclosure etc.

When would a referral to this program be appropriate?

Human resources departments can use the program as a preventative measure or as part of employee development plans. Practitioners can self-refer. Regulatory panels can refer participants as part of suspension or conditions of practice orders. Medical defence or professional organisations can refer people at any stage of proceedings.

Course Aims

The course aims to provide an educational and reflective space for participants to examine the roots of their problematic behaviour and to have assistance in making personal and professional changes. The course goals are:

- To increase responsibility and awareness of all aspects of professional boundaries
- To increase awareness and understanding of personal risk factors
- To identify cognitive distortions
- To put in place a personal boundaries plan. The completion of this 'intent to change' plan, which is a series of measurable commitments around behaviour, is a core component and runs from beginning to end of the course

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Differentiate between boundary crossings and boundary violations
- Understand personal history and antecedents to boundary transgressions
- Consider needs for further professional assistance and personal development
- Understand the effect of boundary crossings on others
- Learn techniques for establishing and maintaining boundaries
- Improve understanding of professional ethics

Expectations of participants

Participants are accepted for the programme following initial discussion by phone with one of the course leaders. The course requests access to any relevant documents in relation to professional conduct enquiries, and access to any other material that may be relevant, such as evaluation reports.

Participants commit to attendance in the three day course. The programme is unlikely to be suitable for people with untreated psychiatric disorders and we may ask permission to discuss any health problem with treating professionals. Participation is voluntary. However, we do not accept participants who wholly deny the existence of a problem.

Participants are asked to take responsibility for contributing actively throughout. The course involves self-reflection, developing and maintaining insight and is informed by the values of accountability,

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transparency and respect. There are a range of course materials, reading and writing tasks and set knowledge transfers but a guiding principle is that participants bring with them a diverse range of knowledge and experience, and are likely to be able to contribute much to the course, both for themselves and for others.

Disclaimer

The course can provide only one element of prevention or remedial plans. Completion of the course is not in itself seen as sufficient to determine fitness to practice, which may not be fully achieved unless additional elements are put in place (such as psychotherapy, practice supervision, or monitored re-training etc).

Venue and Pricing

The courses are run at one of a range of central London venues. The standard price for the full course is £1,400. Sometimes the Clinic is able to organise payment options – please get in touch for details. Participants who have attended other courses at the Clinic are eligible for reduced fees.

Faculty

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Indicative Content

- What are Professional Boundaries and why are they important - Established Definitions
- Boundary Theory: Core Concepts
- Who violates boundaries? Evidence base and offender typologies
- Attachment theory / Family History and Dynamics
- Spectrum Exercise – safe to unsafe
- My Story – Sharing Events. What Happened. Accountability, Challenge, Responsibility
- Boundary Examples from Film and TV
- Cognitive distortions
- Victim Empathy
- Consequences of transgression
- Who are the victims?
- What are the Rules? Professional Ethics
- Boundary Violation Inventory (Self-assessment scale)
- Intimacy/Relationships
- What keeps relationships healthy
- Assertiveness: Aggressive/Assertive/Passive spectrum
- Relapse Prevention
- Key texts
- Personal Boundary Plan