



Guidelines:

Channels of Communication & Appropriate Boundaries

I. Channels of Communication

- A. Organizational Chart (not available at this time)
 - 1. Ed liaison between board and staff
 - 2. No micromanaging = key to following appropriate channels

- B. Volunteer Supervision = staff supervisor for that program
 - 1. Director of Education and Outreach, Volunteer Coordinator: Rhonda Rogers
 - 2. Shelter = Shelba Stover, Shelter Operation Manager, Ada Carey Center.
 - 3. CASA = Jean Cate, CASA Program Director

- C. Supervisor Responsibility
 - 1. Supervisor is responsible for getting a job done by enabling others to do the work (we are all "working" supervisors at Mission Granbury!!!)
 - 2. One of most important duties of a supervisor is to create an environment that empowers staff & volunteers to perform their duties. Note: Empowered staff & volunteers are willing to take responsibility for what they are doing, contribute more than expected, and perceive themselves as important members of the organization's staff =which you are!!!
 - 3. Supervisors provide "1st line" supervision, on-the-job training, and ongoing communication.

- D. Volunteer Responsibility
 - 1. Follow policies & procedures
 - 2. Provide Input & Share Ideas (No Micromanaging!)
 - 3. Be there scheduled-if can't, let supervisor know in advance.



II. Why Boundaries are Important

- A. Appropriate, professional boundaries ...
 1. set limits that protect our clients from exploitation and help us keep our professional objectivity,
 2. protect privacy (clients & volunteers), and
- B. help us from getting into situations that can become problems. There is more to being a helper than simply wanting to help—your training and professionalism are the best tools you have to make sure that what you are doing is helping, not inadvertently hurting the client.
- C. In order to help someone in crisis, we must separate ourselves from their pain yet remain compassionate. This can be very difficult to do!
- D. We must know & avoid crossing lines between “personal” and “professional” no matter how innocent something may seem.
- E. If we don't set boundaries, we run the risk of taking their pain and sorrow home with us every night and that can lead to burnout, making us ineffective helpers. We may put ourselves in a position to suffer harm at the hands of a client. (Example: church lady & disturbed client]. Without boundaries, we run the risk of causing the client further harm.

III. Boundaries Don'ts & Do's

- Don't ever give a client your address, home phone number, pager number, or cell phone number.
- Don't ever encourage a client to contact you directly.
- Don't ever contact a client outside your volunteer work hours.
- Don't represent yourself as a professional or licensed counselor unless you are one, and don't give legal, medical, or other professional advice (unless you are one).
- Don't ever agree to do any sort of business with a victim—including accepting services they perform (whether you pay for the service or not).
- Don't promote your personal or spiritual philosophy.
- Don't make promises that someone or some agency will definitely be able to



help them.

- Don't "socialize" with clients. Under no circumstances is it acceptable to date or have any kind of sexual contact with a client or their friends or relatives.
- Don't invite clients to your home or accept invitations to their homes.
- Don't share your personal story, opinion, or belief. Even if you have been through something similar, the focus is not on the helper.
- Do respond to client's inquiries about your experiences, opinions, or beliefs by re-focusing on their experience. It is more important for them to explore what they think and feel. Do remember that you are a different person with different experiences, even if some of your experiences may be similar.
- If a client asks you about your beliefs, do let them know that it is more important what they believe, or refer them to their spiritual leader.
- Do talk to staff if you have questions or concerns about boundaries.
- Do for clients only things they cannot do for themselves.
- Do not do for clients what they can and need to do for themselves. When we do for clients what they can and need to do for themselves, we create dependence and helplessness. We reinforce the message that they are not capable. When we support them in doing for themselves what they can, we give them a sense of empowerment and return some of the control in their lives that they have lost as a result of family violence.
- **DO REMEMBER:** It's not about me—it's about the client!!