



Boundaries: Good Fences Make Good Neighbors – Or Do They?

Pine Tree Hospice Volunteer Team Meeting

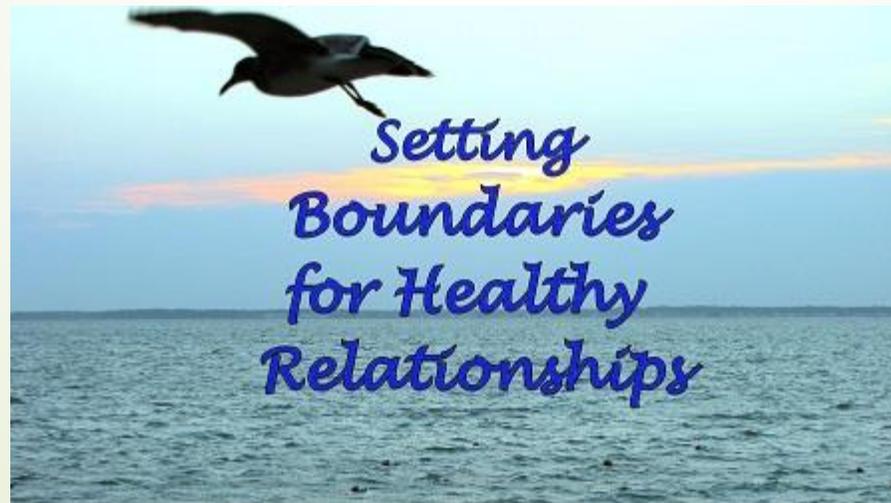
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Boundaries

“The caregiver/patient relationship must incorporate healthy boundaries that allow all parties to live as individuals.”

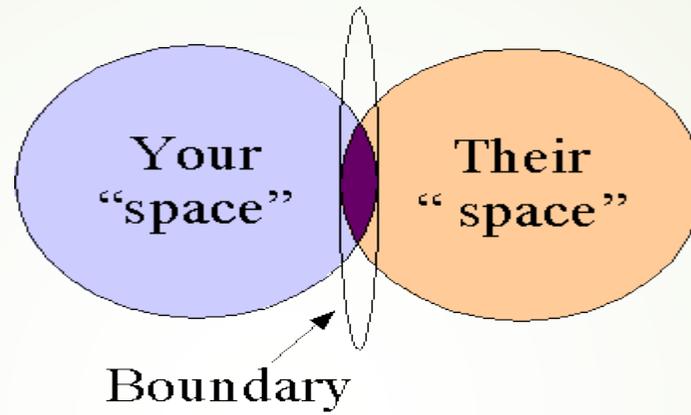
Wegenast, S. (2014)





Boundaries

- Mutually understood physical and emotional limits of the relationship between the patient and the volunteer
 - Give both the volunteer and families a range of acceptable behaviors.
- 



Why are boundaries important?



Why are boundaries important?

- **Vulnerable families**
 - **In their homes**
 - **Represent PT Hospice (part of a team)**
 - **Provide a service**
 - **Not friends**
- 



Who are boundaries for?

What good do they do?

What can happen if boundaries are crossed?



Who?

- Both the client and the volunteer! Sets the parameters of the relationship.





Good

- ▶ **Defines the role** and preserves identity of both the client and the volunteer
 - ▶ fine line between being a friend and being a member of the formal caregiving team
- ▶ **Preserves relationship** – know what to expect
- ▶ **Provides guidance** (when to say “yes” and when to say “no” to a patient’s or family’s request)
- ▶ **Safety and security** in knowing where the boundaries are
- ▶ **Fosters autonomy**, not dependence
 - ▶ Respects and honors autonomy and life/turf of the client
 - ▶ Gives space for client and family to care for themselves
- ▶ **Self Care** (care for self allows you to care for others)
 - ▶ “The love and responsibility are admirable traits, but how long can the patient “feel better” at the caregiver’s expense? Caregivers must direct that love and responsibility to their own well-being first. You are not abandoning them. You are caring for them better by strengthening their main support system—yourself.”
Wegenast, S. (2014)



Where's the Harm?

- ▶ Power Imbalance (client is vulnerable)
- ▶ Fosters dependency
- ▶ Burn out (of caregiver and of the relationship)
- ▶ Enmeshment
- ▶ Unrealistic expectations
- ▶ Reflects on the whole organization
- ▶ Slippery slope – one crossing leads to another ... rationalize
- ▶ Legal issues

Common Boundary Concerns

Claxton-Oldfield, S., Gibbon, L., & Schmidt-Chamberlain, K. (2011).

- accepting money from, or lending money to, a patient or family
- accepting a patient's power of attorney or signing a patient's will
- lending personal belongings to a patient/family
- attempting a deathbed conversion
- providing medical care to a patient
- gossiping about other members of the formal caregiving team.
- accepting a gift from, or buying a gift for, a patient or family member
- attending a patient's medical appointments
- breaking down emotionally in front of a patient or family member.
- giving out personal phone numbers
- accepting an invitation from a patient or family to attend a family activity or party
- continuing to visit with a family following the patient's death
- providing clothes, toys or meals to a patient or family
- staying with a patient or family for longer than the agreed time
- sharing private information about their personal experiences with the death of a loved one



PT Hospice Boundaries

- What are some of your boundaries?
 - What boundaries are unclear for you?
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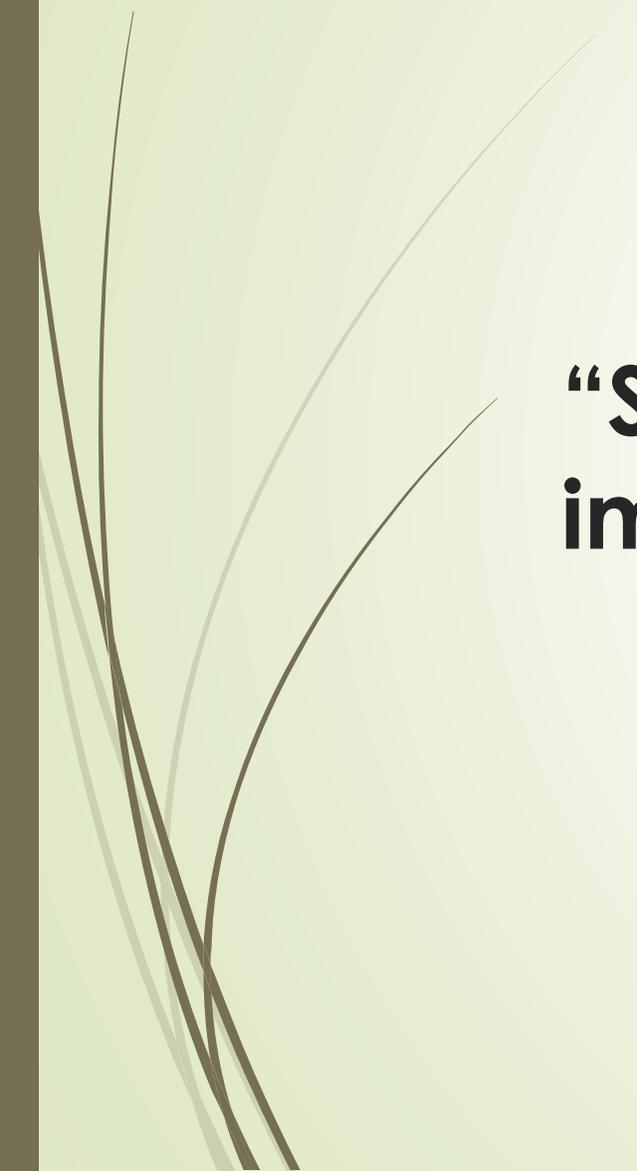


How do you know when you have crossed a boundary? What do you do?

- ▶ Ask yourself:
 - ▶ Whose need is it?
 - ▶ Is this in the best interest of this client?
 - ▶ Does this fit with Pine Tree Hospice policies?
 - ▶ Is it my role?
 - ▶ Does it foster dependency on me?
 - ▶ Would other volunteers do the same?

- ▶ Consult!!!! Seek Supervision!!

Above all: Do good Do no harm



“Saying “no” isn't cruel; rather it implements healthy boundaries.”

(Wegencast, S. , 2014)



References



- ▶ Claxton-Oldfield, S., Gibbon, L., & Schmidt-Chamberlain, K. (2011). When to say “Yes” and when to say “No”: Boundary issues for hospice palliative care volunteers. *American Journal of Hospice & Palliative Medicine*, 28 (6), 429-434. doi: 10.1177/1049909110397926
- ▶ Wegencast, S. (2014). *Caregiving: Are there boundaries?* AARP. Retrieved 08/18/2020 from <https://states.aarp.org/kentucky/caregiving-are-there-boundaries>