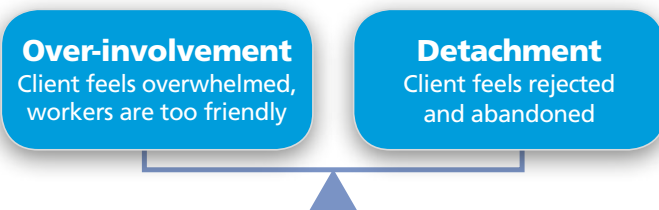


Professional Boundaries

In the Health and Community Industry, workers are required to maintain 'professional boundaries' at all times.

The violation of these boundaries usually occurs when an employee forgets they are not in a personal relationship with a client, but rather are assigned a professional role to play in supporting change with a person, family or community. Maintaining professional boundaries can be difficult (QCOSS 2013). However empowerment and change is best achieved when the balance is managed.



“What I value, I will protect and what you value, I will respect”

Rockelle Lerner 2013

Signs that you are not observing professional boundaries may include

- developing strong feelings for the client
- spending more time with this client than others
- having very personal conversations with the client
- receiving calls at home from the client
- receiving gifts
- doing things for a client rather than enabling the client to do it for themselves
- believing only you can offer the right services to the client
- physically touching the client.

Examples of how you can take care of yourself and minimise blurred boundaries include

- Schedule a regular lunch break daily to restore your energy and help manage stress. If it's not possible to take a walk, then give yourself time at your desk to read a book or magazine

- Balance periodic social breaks to chat and connect with your co-workers and colleagues with uninterrupted alone time for you to focus on your day's agenda and priorities
- Maintain your desired work schedule without allowing others - co-workers, employers, crises - to compromise your ability to leave on time for the majority of your work week
- Make “work talk” off limits during lunch hour, as a general rule. This includes office gossip and criticism
- Minimize multi-tasking each day to avoid burnout by week's end.

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