Chapter 2: Boundaries
Chapter 2 Outline

What Are Boundaries?

Types of Boundaries
- The Physical Boundary
- The Emotional Boundary
- The Intellectual Boundary
- The Sexual Boundary
- The Energetic Boundary

How Boundaries Develop
- The Family
- The Culture at Large

Boundary Models
- Personal Boundaries
- Interactive Boundaries

Boundary Crossings and Violations
- Limitations of Terminology
- What Constitutes Boundary Crossings
- Why Boundary Crossings Occur
- Difficulties in Identifying Boundary Crossings
- Steps to Avoid Boundary Crossings and Violations

Establish, Maintain, and Change Boundaries
- Location of Service
- Interpersonal Space
- Money
- Appearance
- Self-Disclosure
- Language
- Touch
- Time
Chapter 2 Key Terms

Attitude  
Boundary  
Boundary Crossing  
Boundary Violation  
Interactive Boundary  
Permeable Boundary

Personal Boundary  
Power Differential  
Privacy  
Rigid Boundary  
Self-Disclosure  
Semi-Permeable Boundary
What Are Boundaries?

- Boundaries separate people from their environment and from other people.
- Not simply physical.
- Idiosyncratic and contextual.

*Image courtesy of Gualberto107 / FreeDigitalPhotos.net*
Types of Boundaries

- Physical
- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Sexual
- Energetic

"Image courtesy of anankml / FreeDigitalPhotos.net"
The Family

- Privacy
- Physical Contact
- Emotional Connection and Expression
- Intellectual Expression
- Sexual Attitudes
- Sensitivity

"Image courtesy of photostock / FreeDigitalPhotos.net"
The Culture at Large

- Schools
- Media
- Religion
- Voluntary Social Groups
Boundary Models

Personal Boundaries

Interactive Boundaries

*Image courtesy of sattva / FreeDigitalPhotos.net*. 
Personal Boundaries

Permeable
*Figure 2.2*

Semi-Permeable
*Figure 2.3*

Rigid
*Figure 2.4*
Interactive Boundaries

Meeting at the Boundary

Boundary Crossing or Violation

Distance from the Boundary

Figure 2.5

Figure 2.6

Figure 2.7
Boundary Crossings and Violations

- A **boundary crossing** is a transgression that may or may not be experienced as harmful.

- Often the difference in degree that makes an action shift from being considered a boundary crossing to a violation is minute.

- It is also relative: what is a mere boundary crossing to one client may be a major violation to another.

- A **boundary violation** is a harmful transgression of a boundary.
Examples of Boundary Crossings and Violations

- Insensitive Use of Pronouns
- Inappropriate Touch
- Careless or Uninvited Words
- Sexual Misconduct
- Excessively Permeable Boundaries
- Client Reluctance to Personal Disclosure
- Inappropriate Self-Disclosure
- Tardiness
- Inappropriate Use of Social Media
Why Boundary Crossings Occur

Practitioner may:

• Lack understanding of boundaries in general
• Be unaware of own boundaries
• Not understand or pay attention to client’s boundaries
• Make incorrect assumptions about client’s ability to communicate boundary crossings
• Choose to ignore therapeutic boundaries
Boundary Crossing Signals

- Client pulls away when certain areas are touched.
- Client changes communication style (gets overly quiet or overly talkative).
- Client avoids eye contact.
- Client breathing changes: halts, becomes shallow, or increases.
- Client or client’s significant other makes comments to the staff.
- Client doesn’t reschedule.
- Client brings another person to stay in the treatment room.
- Client serves you with a complaint.
Avoid Boundary Crossings by…

• Increasing Empathy
• Managing Energetic Boundaries
• Identifying Clients’ Behavioral Cues
• Asking Questions
• Teaching Boundary Identification and Establishment
• Encouraging Clients to Speak Up
Establish, Maintain, and Change Boundaries

Boundary Change Agents:

- Location of Service
- Interpersonal Space
- Money
- Appearance
- Self-Disclosure
- Language
- Touch
- Time