

St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

Boundaries

What are boundaries?

Personal boundaries are the physical, emotional and mental limits we establish to protect ourselves from being manipulated, used, or violated by others.

Professional boundaries are the limits which define what behaviour is safe, ethical and appropriate for people within an organisation.

Professional boundaries separate behaviour that is supportive from behaviour which, well intentioned or not, damages the supportive nature of the relationship.

Making sense of boundaries

- Some are clear cut/black and white. E.g. the code of conduct says volunteers must not lend money to clients)
- Many of the boundaries our volunteers have to work with/manage fall into grey areas, so they are “fluid” (vary depending on the context). E.g. hugging a client in a private space versus shaking a client’s hand in a public space



Why do we have professional boundaries?

For clients

- ✓ Helps to teach good boundaries
- ✓ To build and maintain client trust
- ✓ Empowers and builds independence
- ✓ Ensure clients receive a consistent service

For staff

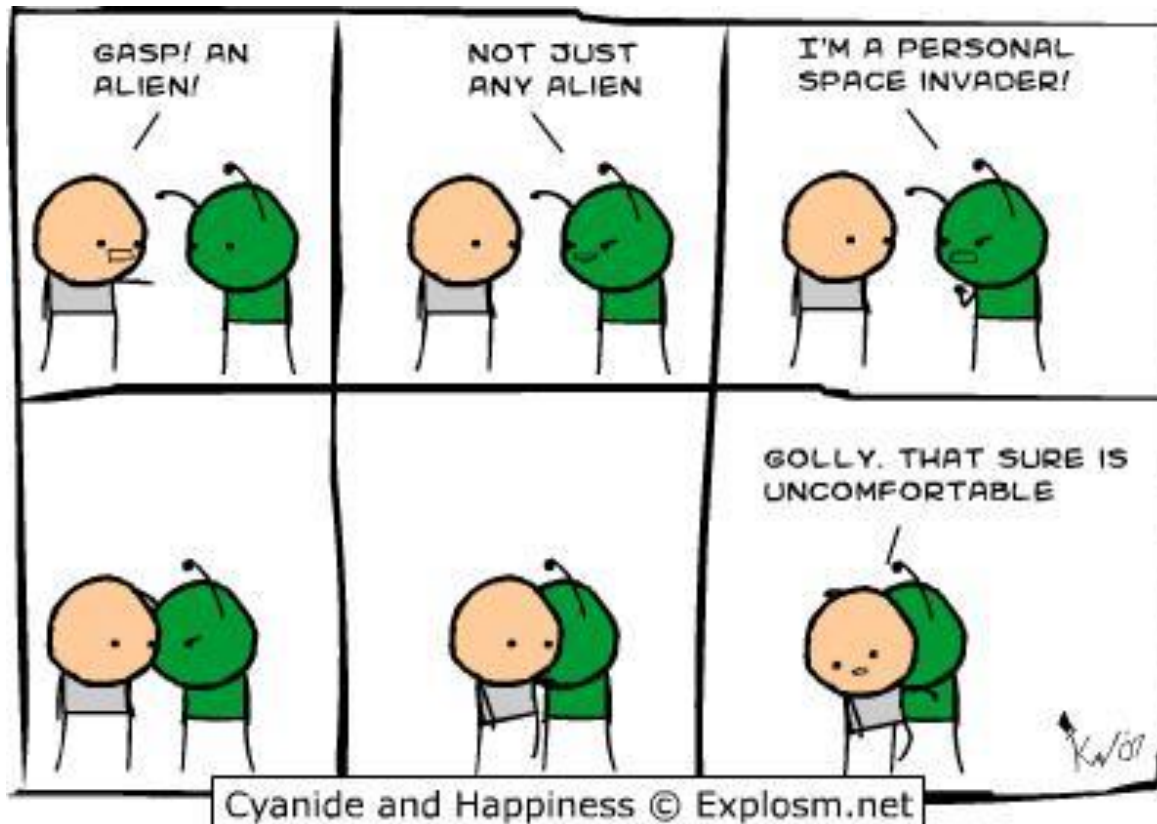
- ✓ Prevent burnout
- ✓ Provides a clear framework which helps to maintain focus
- ✓ Minimises the opportunity for complaints or concerns to be raised

For everyone

- ✓ Health, Safety and protection of all parties
- ✓ Safe & welcoming environments
- ✓ Avoids confusion in implementing an objective stance
- ✓ Ensure a professional and consistent service
- ✓ Ensure good record keeping and accountability
- ✓ Compliance with the law and funders' requirements

Types of boundary

Physical contact



Types of boundary

Time:

- Turning up late
- Spending longer than necessary with a client
- Volunteering out of agreed times



Types of boundary

Money & Gifts

- Giving & receiving money or gifts
- Includes unwanted goods e.g. your old bike



Types of boundary

Role

- Remember you are a volunteer not a staff member or a client whilst you are volunteering.



Types of boundary

Dress & language

- Dress appropriately for your role
- Be mindful of language use, not just swearing, but consider inclusive language and topics.



Activity

In small groups, decide where the statements lie, from “most concerning” to “least concerning”

Key boundaries to observe and respect

- **Do not borrow money from, or lend money to, clients**
- **Do not accept personal gifts from, or give them to, clients**
- **Do not share your personal contact details with clients**
- **Do not enter into personal or sexual relationships with clients**
- **Do not use drugs or drink alcohol with clients**
- **Do not buy anything from, or sell anything to, a client**



Problems with crossing boundaries when volunteering

- **You may set up expectations that you can't deliver**
- **You may lead a client to become dependent on you**
- **You may encourage the breaking of other boundaries**
- **You may distract from the task that you are supposed to be doing**
- **It may be viewed as favouritism**
- **It may cause problems or divisions within the team**

Things to remember...

- **Establish boundaries from the beginning**
- **If boundaries are broken, focus on trying to fix them rather than justifying them.**
- **It is within your role as a volunteer to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries with clients.**
- **If in doubt, speak to your supervisor**



**Thank you for attending
today.**

**We would appreciate
any feedback**