

Addressing Complex Boundary Dilemmas

Program Description

Boundaries refer to the norms that protect and guide professional relationships. Codes of ethics offer guidance in basic boundary setting, focusing on avoiding sexual misconduct and exploitive dual relationships, which constitute flagrant, prohibited, boundary crossings. However, contemporary workplaces involve complex dilemmas in which helping professionals must choose between reasonable competing interests. Using compelling and relevant cases, this presentation explores the gray areas in boundary maintenance and helps attendees employ foresight, consultation, self-regulation, and risk assessment, to confidently navigate these ethically and clinically challenging situations.

Program Objectives

Upon completion of this program participants will be able to:

1. Outline ethical dilemmas within a framework of competing goods.
2. Name the physical, psychological, social, and technological situations that create complex boundary dilemmas.
3. Discuss situations in their own practice that may give rise to boundary dilemmas.
4. List the steps to explore and resolve boundary dilemmas.
5. Explain resolving boundary cases through group discussion.

Target Audience

Clinicians, case managers, social workers, counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, educators, advocates, health, and human service practitioners

Sample Program Agenda

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Introductions, agreements, overview example and discussion and context, global examples from Covid-19. Managing shame and fear Conflicts of interest: The functions and types of boundaries Licensure violations – Right vs. wrong
11:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Break
11:15 AM – 1:15 PM	Complex dilemmas – Right vs. right Interpreting and applying ambiguous ethical standards: case discussions The role of moral courage in boundary Tips for navigating complex boundaries Case applications – moral courage and boundary setting in personal and professional dilemmas
1:15 PM	Adjournment

Contact Hours

Up to 4.0 contact hours

Faculty

Dr. Kim Strom is the Smith P. Theimann, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Professional Practice at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work. Dr. Strom teaches in the areas of direct practice, education, and human resource management. Her scholarly interests involve ethics, moral courage, and social work education. She is the former chair of the National Association of Social Workers' National Committee on Inquiry and is active in training, consultation and research on ethics and social work practice. She has written over sixty articles, monographs and chapters on ethics and practice. She is the author of *Straight Talk about Professional Ethics* and *The Ethics of Practice with Minors: High Stakes and Hard Choices* and the forthcoming text *Cultivating Courage*. Dr. Strom-Gottfried is also the co-author of the texts *Best of Boards*, *Direct Social Work Practice* and *Teaching Social Work Values and Ethics: A Curriculum Resource*. Dr. Strom also held an appointment as the UNC Institute for the Arts and Humanities Associate Director for the Academic Leadership Program, which helps prepare and support the next generation of academic leaders. Currently, she serves as Principal Investigator of the UNC School of Social Work behavioral healthcare contract and has been recently appointed by the chancellor to serve as Director of the UNC - Chapel Hill Office of Ethics Education and Policy Management.