

Professional Boundaries

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

Subee Newlake staff are responsible for maintaining professional boundaries when providing services to clients, families and stakeholders. Professional boundaries enable staff and clients/family to engage safely and effectively in a therapeutic relationship.

2. Scope

This policy has been written for and applies to all Subee Newlake staff, clients, clients families and stakeholders.

3. Definition

Professional boundaries are the limits to the relationship of a member of staff and a person in their care which allows for a safe, therapeutic connection between staff and that person (and their nominated partner, family and friends), protecting both staff and client.

Professional boundaries are bidirectional applying to both clients as well as staff.

4. Procedure

Understanding of professional boundaries includes recognising the potential conflicts, risks and complexities of providing care and support to clients.

Subee Newlake staff are trained in professional boundaries through:

- Being provided with and signing off on the organisations requirements for ethical conduct which is outlined in their Code of Conduct Policy

- The Ausmed eLearning Module: Understanding Professional Boundaries
- The *Quick Reference Guide* given to support workers at induction outlines key point around professional boundaries.
- Professional boundaries worksheet completed during mandatory training.

Professional boundaries for employees can be complicated by the ongoing length or frequency of services provided to client.

It can be challenging, and staff should raise any concerns or training needs with their manager.

Social relationships between Subee Newlake staff and clients, family members are NOT appropriate, and this includes social relationships via social networking sites or electronic means.

Any contact made by clients directly to staff via social networking sites or phone is also NOT allowed and staff should report directly to their line management.

Subee Newlake staff who visit clients at home must only be on work related business which is agreed by the team and documented in the Client Support Plan.

Requests by clients and families for staff to visit at home outside of these arrangements should be declined by staff, documented in their progress notes under issues and concerns and relayed to the line management.

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Some examples of unacceptable behaviours or practices relating to professional boundaries include but are not limited to;

- Feeling like you are the only one that understands the client;
- Favours, asking for special consideration;
- Being referred to as a friend by the client and/or their family;
- Worrying about them when you go home; • Sharing personal information;
- Visiting the client outside your shift time;
- Staying back after the shift has been completed;
- Inappropriate body language;
- Gestures or words that would not be seen as professional; • Jokes about relationships, sexuality or intimacy
- Physical contact which is not essential to the delivery of the support task;
- Accepting money or gifts, or loans/borrowing
- Witnessing or signing legal documents
- Or any other behaviour that may be deemed by the Client, family or other parties to compromise professional boundaries

5. Managing professional boundaries

Staff are encouraged to declare to their manager if there is a pre-existing social relationship (acquaintance, friend, relative connection etc.) with a client or their family.

The Manager will manage any declaration sensitively and always maintain confidentiality and only inform others on a need-to-know basis.

Breaches of professional boundaries will be managed in line with existing performance management

procedures to ensure the safety of staff and client/families is managed accordingly.

Any breaches of professional conduct will be reordered on TRACK incident register and in the appropriate clients or staff file.

6. Relevant documents

P-Conflict of Interest Policy
P-Confidentiality and Privacy
P-Code of Conduct Policy

Worker Participant Acknowledgement

I acknowledge receiving the Subee Newlake Professional Boundaries Policy; that I will comply with the procedure; and that there may that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the termination of my employment or contract for services.

Workplace participants name:

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Signed:

Date:

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