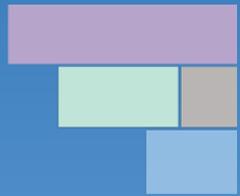


Georgia PATH Program Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health
and Developmental Disabilities

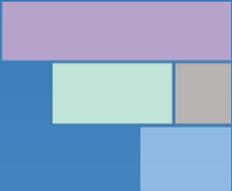


PATH Boundaries, Burnout and Self-Care

Sherri Downing

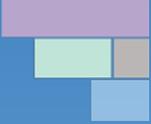
Michelle Cleary

May 25, 2021



Georgia PATH Program





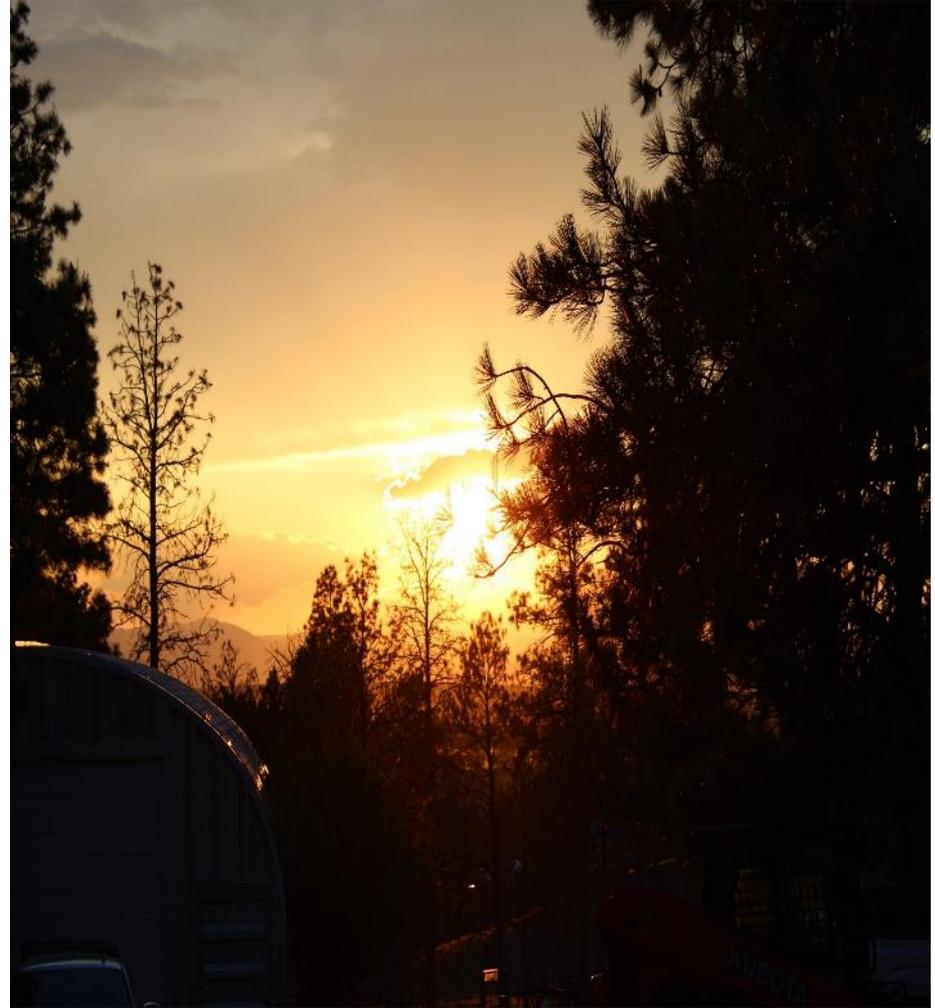
Welcome and Introductions

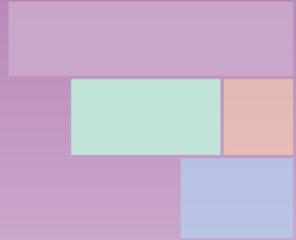


- Who are you?
- What is your role?
- What do you love about PATH?

Objectives

- Understand boundary issues in outreach practices.
- Discuss ethical implications in building relationships with clients.

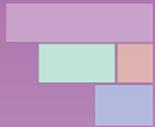




Defining Professional Boundaries

PATH Outreach and Engagement

Who are your clients?



*PATH clients **must** be seriously mentally ill (SMI) or SMI with co-occurring substance use disorders (SUDs) and homeless or at risk of homelessness.*



States determine the population served within parameters set by the legislation. PATH focuses on those who are most at risk – particularly those who are literally homeless and living outdoors.

Your job

- You are charged with outreach and engagement
- You work to build a trusting, therapeutic relationship
- Activities include frequent, consistent contact...meeting clients where they are...helping people meet their subsistence needs ...
- Whatever it takes

The
client
drives
the bus.



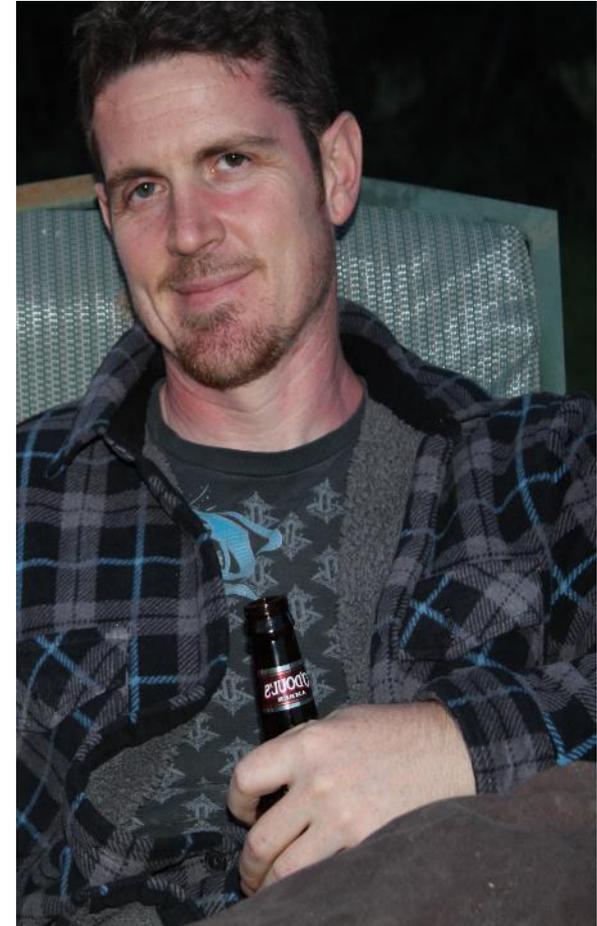
■ Boundaries in office-based practice

- Relatively easy to set client/staff boundaries
- Time limited
- Contact is limited to appointments during work hours
- Clear expectations and roles



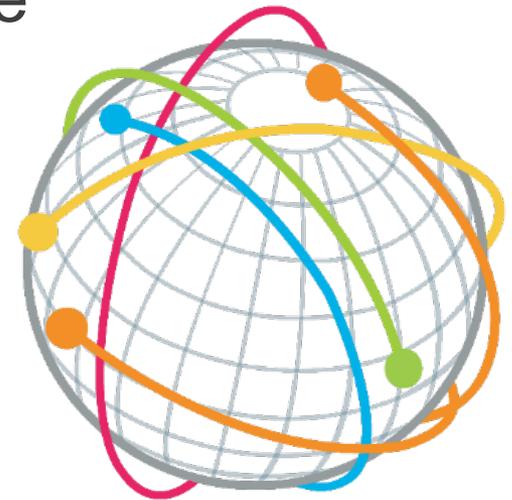
Boundaries for outreach workers

- Work in various community locations
- Engage in a range of activities
- Offer food, beverages, blankets, clothing
- Visit people “at home” (even if that home is outdoors)
- Shifting relationships
- Clients can come to view you as a friend



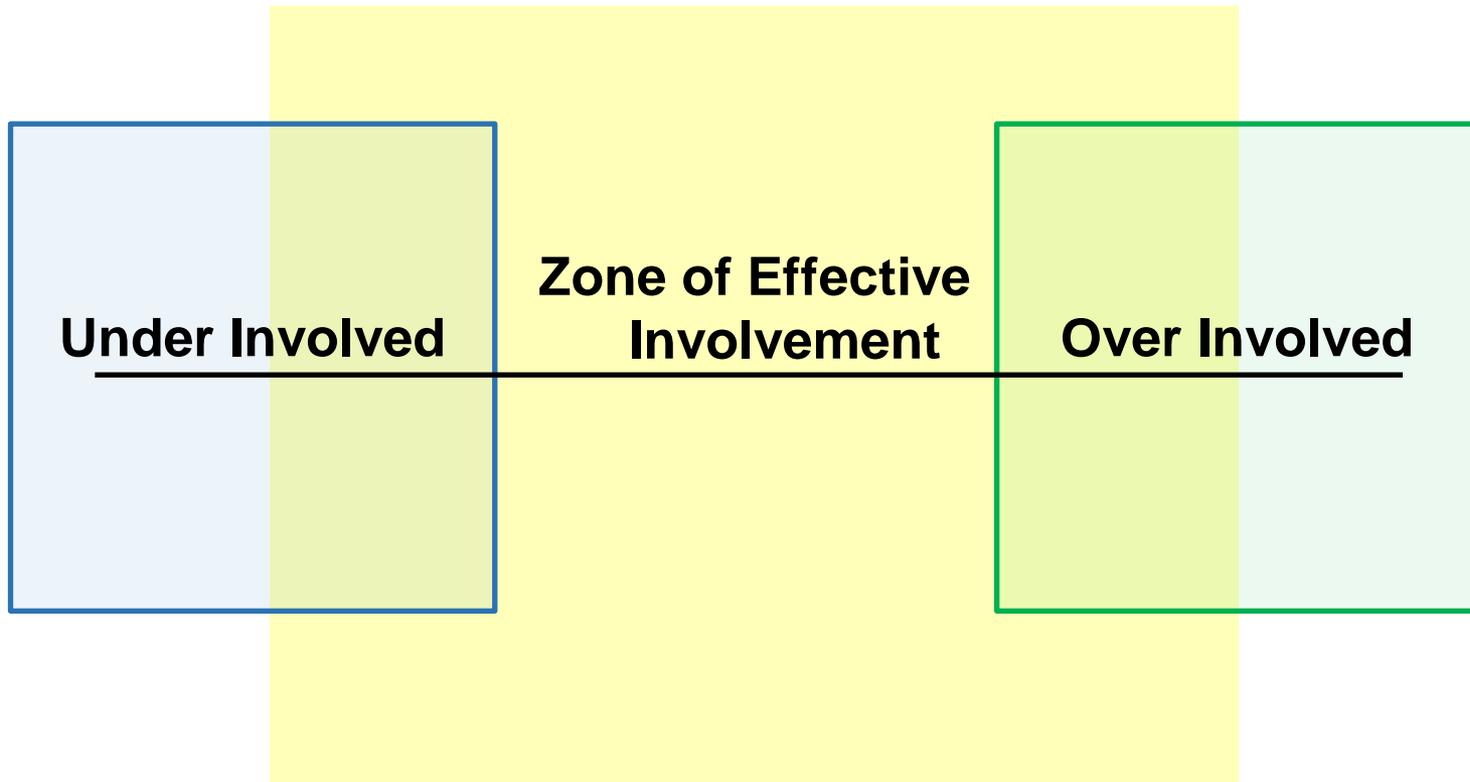
Outreach workers

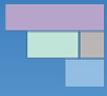
- See the devastating effects of homelessness
- Work with people who are symptomatic
- Engage with people who feel hopeless, powerless, angry
- Lack of direct oversight
- You want to go the extra mile for clients
- You want to make a difference





The right thing...the right way





Professional boundaries

- Clear limits that allow for safe connections between staff and clients
- Being friendly, not being friends
- Knowing where you end and the client begins
- Develop understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your role as a service provider
- Do not do for your clients what they can do for themselves
- Crises may be natural consequences and that's okay

Boundaries and ethics

- Boundary: something that indicates limits; a limiting line

“No is a complete sentence.”

– Annie Lamott

- Ethics: a system of moral principles; moral standards by which people behave. A code of conduct.

Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do. – Potter Stewart

Ethical Values

- Value: Service
 - *Goal is to help and promote well-being among those in need*
- Value: Dignity and worth of the individual
 - *Each person is treated with caring and respect, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.*
- Value: Importance of relationships
 - *Relationships are an important vehicle for change.*
- Integrity
 - *Act honestly and responsibly*



Unequal power

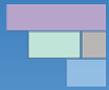


- Exploitation is a risk when a relationship is unequal in power
- Power inequity is always true:
 - Employer/employee
 - Supervisor/supervisee
 - Client/staff
 - Criminals/victims
 - Adults/children
 - What else?

Boundaries: clear *lines*



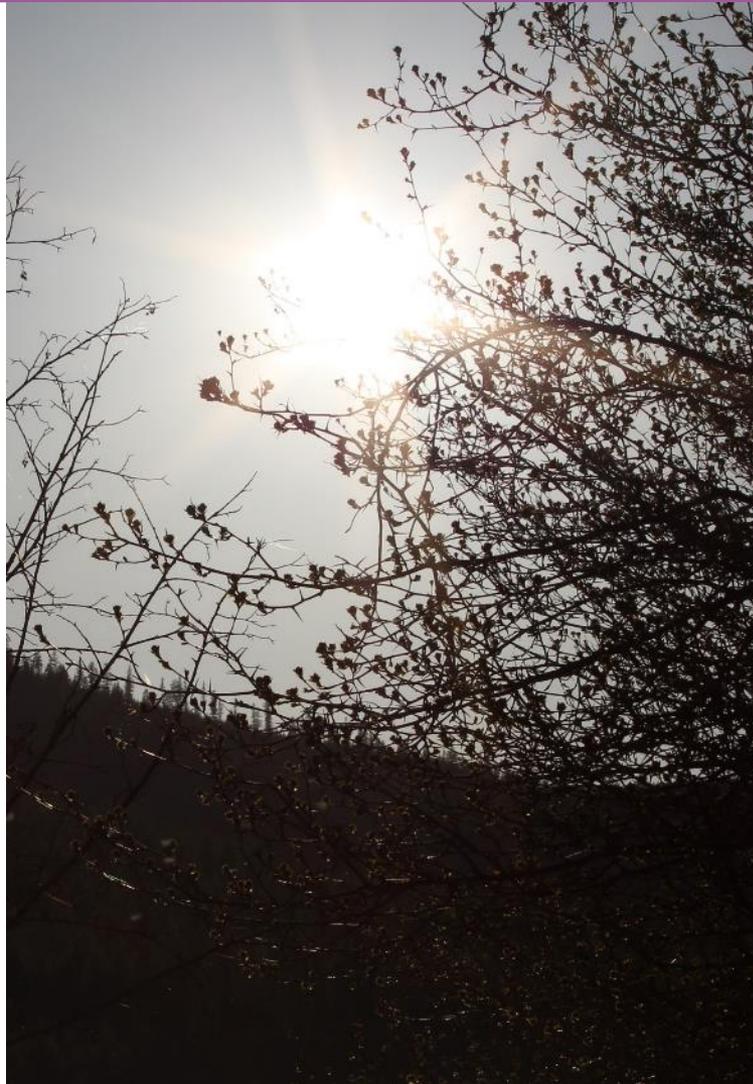
- Don't give or loan money
- Don't take clients to your home
- Don't have sex
- Don't establish a transactional relationship
- *What else?*



Types of boundaries

- Physical
 - Examples: Inappropriate touching, looking through mail, close-talkers
- Emotional/intellectual
 - Examples: Getting caught in someone else's world to the extent that you feel bruised, wounded, battered; inappropriate conversations or jokes
- Time
 - Unreasonable expectations
- What else?

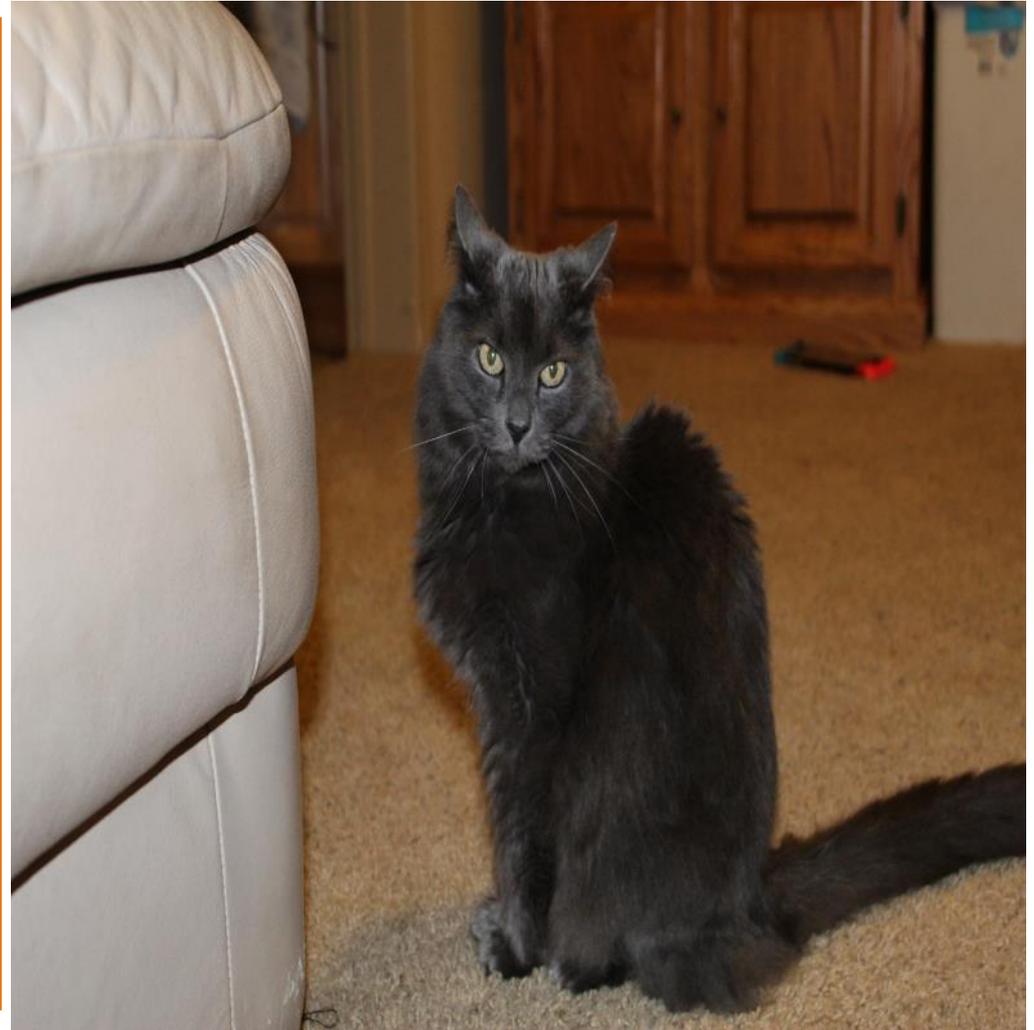
Boundaries: gray areas

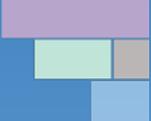


- Share your personal history
- Share your home number
- Friend clients on Face Book
- Accept a gift
- Pay a client to mow your lawn
- Work with a client when you're not on the job
- Work with clients who are no longer PATH-enrolled

Discussion: your boundary issues

What issues have you had in setting boundaries with a client?

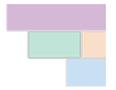




Power Differentials



Professional boundaries are the spaces between the helping professional's power and the client's vulnerability.



Power differentials

- People experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable
- Hurt people can *hurt people*
- Power of the helper comes from professional position and access to private knowledge about the client
- Establishing boundaries helps us control the power differential and allows safe connection
- The more vulnerable the client, the stricter we must be with boundaries.



Healthy boundaries

Help	Providers focus on their responsibilities to the clients they serve
Allow	Providers to model healthy behaviors, communication and professional relationships
Ensure	Physical and emotional safety
Establish	Clear understandings regarding roles and expectations
Encourage	And allow open, safe communication

What does it look like?

- Safe relationship for client *and* provider
- The relationship is supervised and the worker follows rules – this is transparent from the beginning
- The relationship is consistent but flexible
- The relationship promotes growth, independence and self sufficiency
- The focus is on the client's needs
- The relationship is not transactional





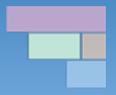
Professional versus personal

- Too much self-disclosure shifts the focus from the client to the provider and can confuse understanding of roles and expectations
- Personal information shared should be relevant and focused on advancing the client's care goals
- Role confusion can lead to making the client feel betrayed, abandoned and leave them unwilling to trust other providers

Red flags

- Disproportionate amount of time spent with any one client
- Over-identification or becoming enmeshed with a client
- Putting yourself in the role of hero in the client's life
- What else?



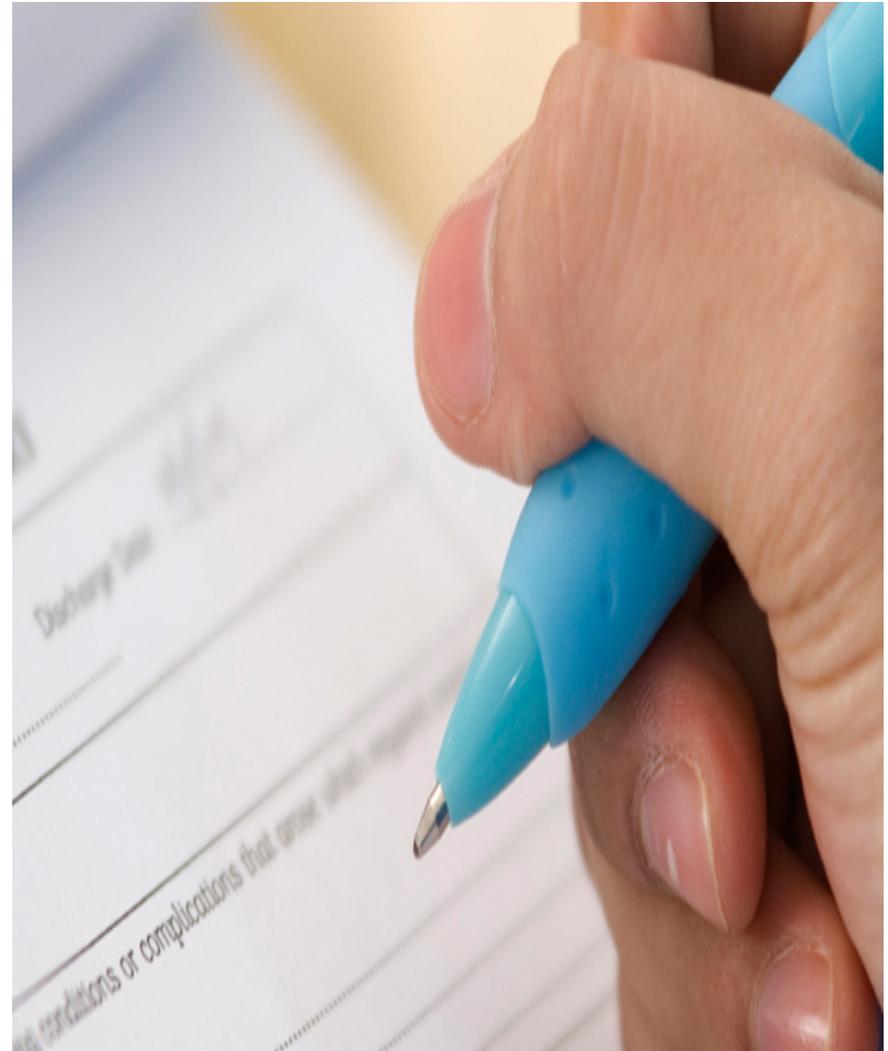


Informed consent

- The act of agreeing to allow something to happen, or to do something, with a full understanding of all the relevant facts, including risks, and available alternatives.
- That full knowledge and understanding is the necessary factor in whether an individual can give informed consent.
- This type of consent applies to many situations in life, including making decisions about medical care and legal issues, as well as entering into contracts.

When is informed consent needed?

Alex is an active PATH client and he is receiving supportive and mental health services. You want to refer him to the local Continuum of Care to get him into housing and will need to provide details about his living situation and disability. What do you do?



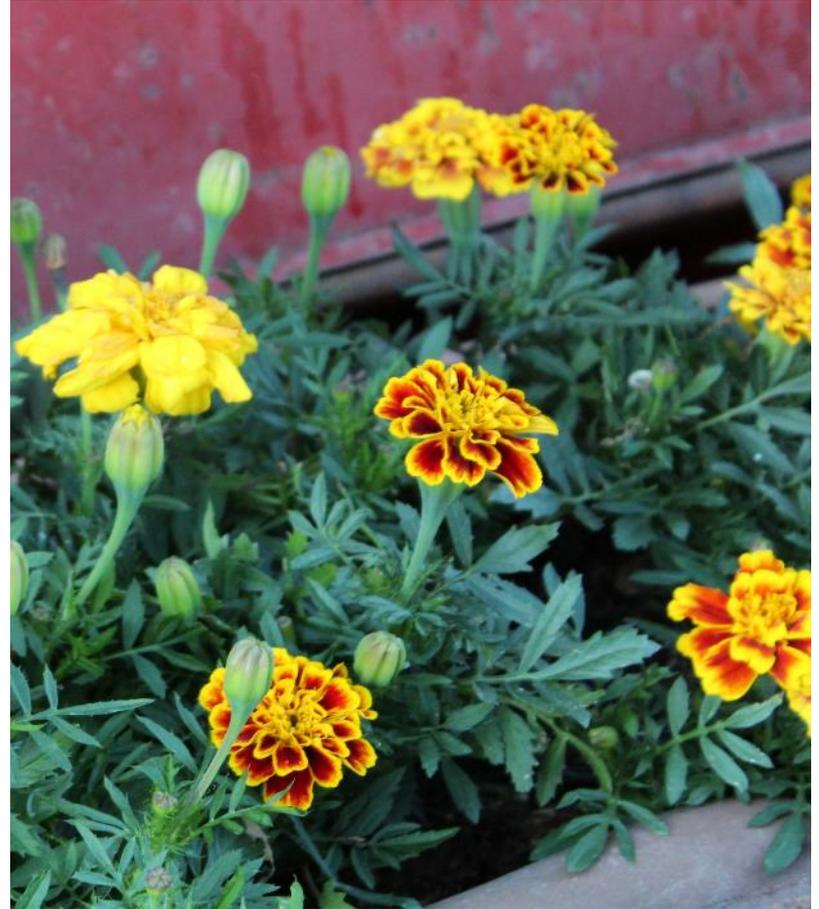


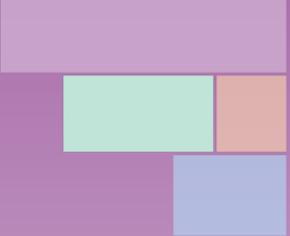
Dual relationships

A dual relationship occurs when the client and provider have another type of relationship outside of their professional relationship:

- Church
- School
- Childhood friends

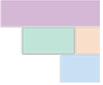
What must you remember?





Self-care and burnout





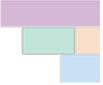
Why self-care?

Studies show that ethical misconduct and boundaries violations is more common among those experiencing burn-out.

Self-care allows you to care for your clients in a sustainable way with greater compassion, effectiveness and empathy.

Dimensions of self care should include physical, social, emotional/mental, creative, spirituality and mindfulness.





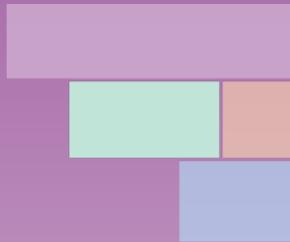
Burn-out and compassion fatigue

- As helping professionals, you are trusted with your clients' darkest secrets, heart-wrenching stories and immensely difficult life situations.
- Burnout—a state of emotional, mental, or physical exhaustion is brought on by prolonged or repeated stress.
- Cynicism, depression and lethargy are characteristic of burnout.

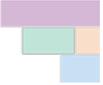


Report out and final thoughts



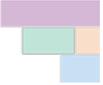


Evidence-Based Resources



Self Care/ Wellness

- SAMHSA Promoting Wellness for Better Behavioral and Physical Health - https://mfpc.samhsa.gov/ENewsArticles/Article12b_2017.aspx
- ATTC Self-Care Plug-in - <https://attcnetwork.org/centers/pacific-southwest-attc/product/self-care-plug>



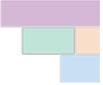
Self Care/ Wellness (cont'd)

- ATTC Self Care Series: Regular Emotional Check-Ins -
https://attcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Regular%20Emotional%20Check%20Ins_multi%20language.pdf
- ATTC Handouts for Practicing Self-Care in the Workplace -
<https://attcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Handouts%20Practicing%20Self-care.pdf>



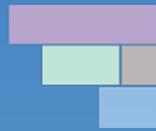
Boundaries

- SAMHSA TAP 21 Addiction Counseling Competencies - <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma12-4171.pdf>
- SAMHSA TIP 57 Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services - <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma14-4816.pdf>
- ATTC Professional Boundaries for Peer Advocates - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcGdnMaqOks>



Burnout/Compassion Fatigue

- ATTC - Compassion Fatigue and the Behavioral Health Workforce Curriculum Infusion Package - <http://uclaisap.org/html2/compassion-fatigue-behavioral-workforce-cip.html>
- SAMHSA – Understanding Compassion Fatigue Fact Sheet - <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Understanding-Compassion-Fatigue/sma14-4869>



Questions and Discussion

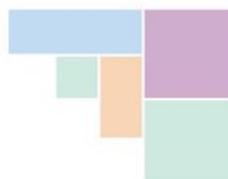


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