



# Boundaries:

## **Navigating relationships as professionals**

Sarah Shepard, LISW-CP






# Question/Pop Quiz

**What are our three favorite topics of conversation?**

Please place  
answers in the  
chat so we can  
see them







# Definition of Boundaries

**How do they protect clients?**

**How do they protect us as social workers?**





# The Clichés: not cliques we want to be part of

- **Over-involved**
- **Under-involved**



# Cultural Norms

- **What is a cultural norm?**
- **Culture: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group**
- **Norm: a principle of right action binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behavior**



# Cultural Norms

Not covering face as sneezing	Excuses and incomplete
Close talkers	Soft talker
Lack of eye contact	Hoarding
Man wearing a Yarmulke/Kippah	Gun racks in a truck
Disorganized household routines	Lateness



# The Legend, The Myth, The Original

**A team goes into a home of client for a family meeting in a multi-generational household. The grandmother escorts the team into the dining room where a homemade meal is offered, as is culturally expected by the family. The team has another appointment in 90 minutes on the other side of town.**

- It is lamb, an honor. Two of your three teammates are vegan.**



A background image showing a top-down view of a person's feet wearing white sneakers with dark laces, standing on a light-colored, textured surface like concrete. The image is slightly faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

# Milk and Cookies

During an appointment where the client takes pre-scheduled transportation, they ask you to return a library book for them. It is on your way.

The next week she calls you and asks you to pick up a book she has placed a hold on at the library. They are expecting you. Do you pick that up?



# It's A Small World After All

In the office, a client's care partner stated that they have stopped attending their 12-step meetings. Your teammate makes a reference to having attended the same meeting. They start to talk about people they both know, benefits to working the program, etc.





# Cancer Stinks

A client has cancer and you are coordinating with his medical team. You are a survivor. He asks you one day if you've ever had cancer...





# Recommendations

**A client is nervous about taking medication for anxiety. The client mentions that a team member disclosed they've taken it before and it worked well for them.**

**The client asks a few questions about the medication and side effects and decides to try it. Client resumes discussion of their treatment.**





# Family

**You are speaking with an elderly client. They ask why you are not wearing a wedding ring, if you have children...**



# Do we need to disclose to connect?

A client is having a difficult time building trust. It's been a few weeks. You know you have children in the same sports league and this could bridge that divide. You offer up a few pictures, chat about the games and people you have in common. About 15 minutes later you start to address the work you've laid out to complete.





# Corrections

**A lot of what the scenarios bring up are things out of our control. Life**


**How we react greatly affects our relationships with our clients and team members.**

**Think of boundaries as fluid. Geographically they are ever changing as are our relationships.**



**The most important thing we need to learn is how to adjust ours.**





**What are your thoughts?**