



Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

ECAY6007

Professional Practice in Advocacy: Tensions and Opportunities



www.uwtsd.ac.uk



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Aims:

To identify legislation, codes, conducts and values associated with professional standards in advocacy work.





Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of how management of personal behaviour/ interaction with others is influenced by legislation, codes, conducts and values associated with professional standards in advocacy work;
- identify and critically engage with appropriate standards relating to specific interest groups;
- explore interventions which support the voice of the individual;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of how current legislation establishes a framework of measures designed to maintain professional boundaries, professional practices and in the provision of effective advocacy services.



Professional Boundaries in Practice



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Managing Professional Boundaries

- Advocates Must (as with all other social care workers)
- Understand and act within key boundaries and maintain a professional relationship with clients
- Are expected to uphold key boundaries to protect themselves, their clients and the organisation they work for.
- Ensure that relationships between social workers and clients remain professional.
- Even when working on very personal and difficult issues

(Hardy, 2017)

What are – Professional Boundaries?

- Examples and Implications for practice:
 1. **Client focus.** You are expected to place the needs of service users on your caseload at the centre of any decisions that you make about them and their lives
 2. **Self-disclosure.** Information about yourself and your personal life should not be disclosed to clients.
 3. **Dual relationships.** You should not hold more than one type of relationship with a client, for example, they cannot work for you, be a family member or receive extra private support from you, as well as be one of your clients.

(Hardy, 2017)

What are – Professional Boundaries?

- Examples and Implications for practice (continued):
 - 4. Working within your competence. It is important that you understand the limitations of your role and of your personal capabilities, and when to refer to other professionals or to seek further support and advice for yourself and your clients.
 - 5. Looking after self. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in a fit state to do the job that you are required to do. This covers not only your behaviour outside work but also how you manage your stress and emotions within work and caused by your work.

(Hardy, 2017)

Crossing or Breaking Boundaries

- The reality of work in the social care sector is that boundaries will get crossed at various points, due to:
 - human error
 - tiredness, stress
 - manipulation by clients
 - difficult situations
 - bad luck or just a bad day at the office

(Community Care, 2017)

Crossing or Breaking Boundaries

- It is your job to:-
 - spot potential and actual boundary crossings and to take appropriate action.
 - Discussion question:
 - What do you consider might be appropriate action?

(Community Care, 2017)

Patterns & Build ups

- Build ups of:
- Behaviour between you and your client
- Much of which will be an internal process (both you and your client)
- ‘It is not practical for us to challenge everything that a client says or does that might be a crossed boundary and so we have to work in a world where we are essentially doing an ongoing dynamic risk assessment of the situation, intervening where necessary’.

Personal versus Professional

- What is the key to managing boundaries within PCP?

(BASW, 2017)

Personal versus professional

- The key to managing many of these boundaries is understanding the difference between a professional and a personal relationship and ensuring that your behaviour always remains on the right side of the line

Professional Relationships

- Are time bound
- Have a distinct role and purpose
- Have some structure
- One participant holds the power and is specifically trained and supported for the role?
- There is a power imbalance in favour of the professional?
- The professional has a responsibility for the welfare of the non-professional and there are rules and boundaries that guide the relationship. (BASW, 2017)

Caution

- Consequences of blurring boundaries:
 - It becomes much harder for you to maintain other professional boundaries.
- When you do behave in a professional manner, clients will be:
 - Surprised, unhappy and resentful as:
 - ‘they may have been expecting a personal response’.
 - Much harder for you to make the decisions that your role or your service requires you to make if they are detrimental to the client.

Caution

- According to Hardy (2017)

‘You and your client need to be clear that you are not literally, potentially or figuratively their friend, parent, partner or child, and it is your responsibility to ensure that this is not the case’.

Feedback to Hardy's (2017) work

- I'm surprised the words 'transparent and honest' were not mentioned. Surely there is a responsibility to let clients know where the SWs (Advocate') boundaries are.

Feedback to Hardy's (2017) work

- “one participant holds the power and is specifically trained and supported for the role; there is a power imbalance in favour of the professional” – surely this is completely unprofessional?

Feedback to Hardy's (2017) work

- Sometimes giving very guided personal information develops relationships and gains trust for the person you are working with to open up. But it has to be carefully considered. I have been caught out and learnt the hard way.

British Association of Social Workers (BASW)

- Accepting 'risk' is part of personalisation, says Chief Social Worker for Adults

(Romeo, 2017)

Risk Management

- Stated that: social workers along with other agencies such as the police and the NHS need to adopt a less “risk-averse” approach to helping people.

(Romeo, 2017)

Lord Justice Munby [President of the Family Division in England and Wales (2017)]

- “made a statement about safeguarding and said ‘what good is it making someone safer if it merely makes them miserable?’

Risk and Caring

- “We all want to make sure we have the life we want even though sometimes there are lots of risk and difficulty in that. We want as much choice and control over our lives as we can.”

Lord Justice Munby [President of the Family Division in England and Wales (2017)]

Risk and Caring

- “We all want to make sure we have the life we want even though sometimes there are lots of risk and difficulty in that. We want as much choice and control over our lives as we can.”

(Essex A.M. , 2008)

A Social Work Perspective



BASW: Professional Boundaries

- A good definition of the term ‘professional boundary’ is the “boundary between what is acceptable and unacceptable for a professional both at work and outside work”.
- The emphasis here should be placed on the word 'professional': some behaviour will always be unacceptable whether or not an individual is a professional.
- Professional boundaries, though, concern behaviour that is acceptable or unacceptable in light of the fact that an individual is a professional.

Supervision and Professional Boundaries

General professional boundaries questions:

- Would you be comfortable discussing all of your actions, and the rationale for those actions, in a supervision session with your manager?
- Would you be uncomfortable about a colleague or your manager observing your behaviour?
- If challenged, could you give an explanation as to how your actions are grounded in social work values?
- Do your actions comply with the relevant policies of your employer?

Relationships and Professional Boundaries

- It is always the responsibility of the social worker to ensure that the relationship remains a professional one and that the service user understands the social worker's role in their life.

Relationships and Professional Boundaries

- A central reason for requiring social workers to manage their relationships with service users, service users' friends and families and ex-service users is the existence of a power imbalance in this relationship.
- This power imbalance occurs because of the following factors:

Relationships and Professional Boundaries

- individuals may not be free to choose whether they engage with social workers, but may be under compulsion to do so or may feel they have to do so, for example, in order to gain access to resources;
- social workers have access to intimate knowledge about service users and about their significant others;

Relationships and Professional Boundaries

- at the point when social workers become involved, a service user may be distressed, confused and/or suffering from mental illness;
- social workers may be working with individuals where the possibility of statutory intervention is present: the removal of a child from a family or the compulsory admission of someone who is mentally ill;

Relationships and Professional Boundaries

- social workers may be making significant decisions regarding service users' access to resources.
- This power imbalance should not be regarded negatively, but should be acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of such relationships.

Relationships and Professional Boundaries

- The power that social workers have helps to put them in a position where they can help service users to make positive changes in their lives.
- However, this power can also be abused.
- The existence of this power imbalance should be a central consideration when social workers form and manage their relationships with service users, their friends and family, and also with ex-service users.

Relationships and Professional Boundaries

- In general terms, social workers need to ensure that they act in the best interests of service users.
- Service users' interests can, though, conflict with each other - for instance when working with a parent and a child - and there are situations where the broader interests of society must take precedent, such as when a service user constitutes a risk to others.
- These are some of the complexities that social workers confront in their work.



“A lot of people are quite scared of social workers. Because of the power they have. The power can be for good or ill. And I have had a very positive and a very negative experience – even with the same social worker.”

“Some social workers, like the one I had, are deliberately predatory people. But there are probably lots of other social workers who find themselves sliding down that slippery slope without realising how they came there. It’s incredibly important to understand how they get themselves into these situations of blurring the boundaries. They might have good intentions and despite themselves, find themselves in that situation.”

“A social worker is party to personal information that can make for an unequal footing.”

“My social worker had a positive impact on my life and really helped me change my circumstances around.”

“I think they generally do a good job in horrendous circumstances. The one I had was a very decent person.”

An Advocacy Perspective



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

The Advocacy Charter

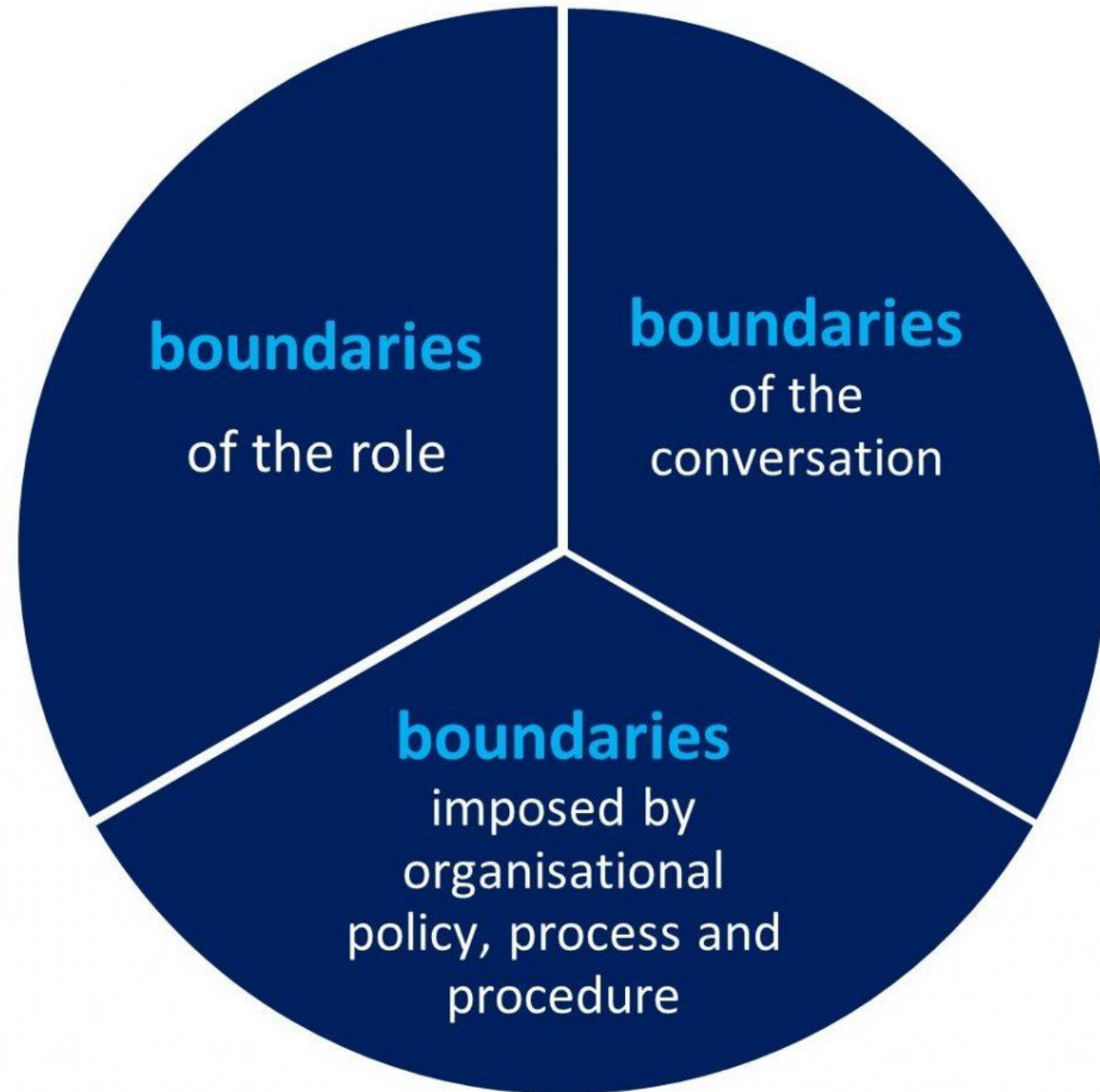
- 1. Advocates should be clear about the nature and extent of their role. They should understand the boundaries of their own advocacy role and nonadvocacy roles such as mediation and advice giving
- 2. Advocates should not act outside of these boundaries. Advocates should seek permission (where the client has the capacity to consent or refuse) to refer people on to other agencies where appropriate.

The Advocacy Charter

- 3. Advocates should refer clients who lack capacity to consent to other appropriate services, including other advocacy providers, where appropriate/in their best interests (in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005).
- 4. Advocates should be able to explain, in straightforward language, what advocacy is and isn't; why some people need advocacy; where people have a statutory right to access advocacy; where there is a statutory duty placed on the NHS or Local Authority to instruct an advocate; and the benefits advocacy can bring. They should be equipped to answer questions and deal with enquiries about advocacy.

The Advocacy Charter

- 5. Advocates should be responsible for providing clients with a clear explanation of their role at the start of any new relationship, which should include providing easy to read materials where this is required.
- 6. Advocates should provide written information about their organisation and a copy of the Code of Practice to clients, carers or other professionals if requested.



QUESTION

- Comparing the two examples of Professional Boundaries in social work and Advocacy, do they share the same principles?

TASK

- List the boundaries that are important to you as a professional, and why you value those boundaries.

Useful links:

- BASW: http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_24624-5.pdf
- Professional Boundaries Report: Centre for Health and Social care Research
- http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_30648-7.pdf
- BASW: Accepting Risk
<https://www.basw.co.uk/news/article/?id=741>
- WAG Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries:
- Transforming Public Services in Wales. http://www.cieh-cymruwales.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Professional_practice/making_connections_2006.pdf
- All Wales induction framework for health and social care Resources, legislation, policy links and relevant reviews to subject area 2017
- https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Induction-Framework-Resources.pdf

Reference list:

- BASW (2017) Professional Boundaries: Guidance for social workers Available at http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_24624-5.pdf Accessed on 02/03/2018
- BASW (2017) Accepting 'Risk' Available at <https://www.basw.co.uk/news/article/?id=741> Accessed on 02/03/2018
- Hardy, R. (2017) Community Care. Available at <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2017/06/19/top-tips-managing-professional-boundaries-social-work/> Accessed on 02/03/2018
- WAG (2006) Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries: Transforming Public Services in Wales Available at http://www.cieh-cymruwales.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Professional_practice/making_connections_2006.pdf Accessed on 02/03/2018