



WHOLE FOOD NUTRIENT SOLUTIONS

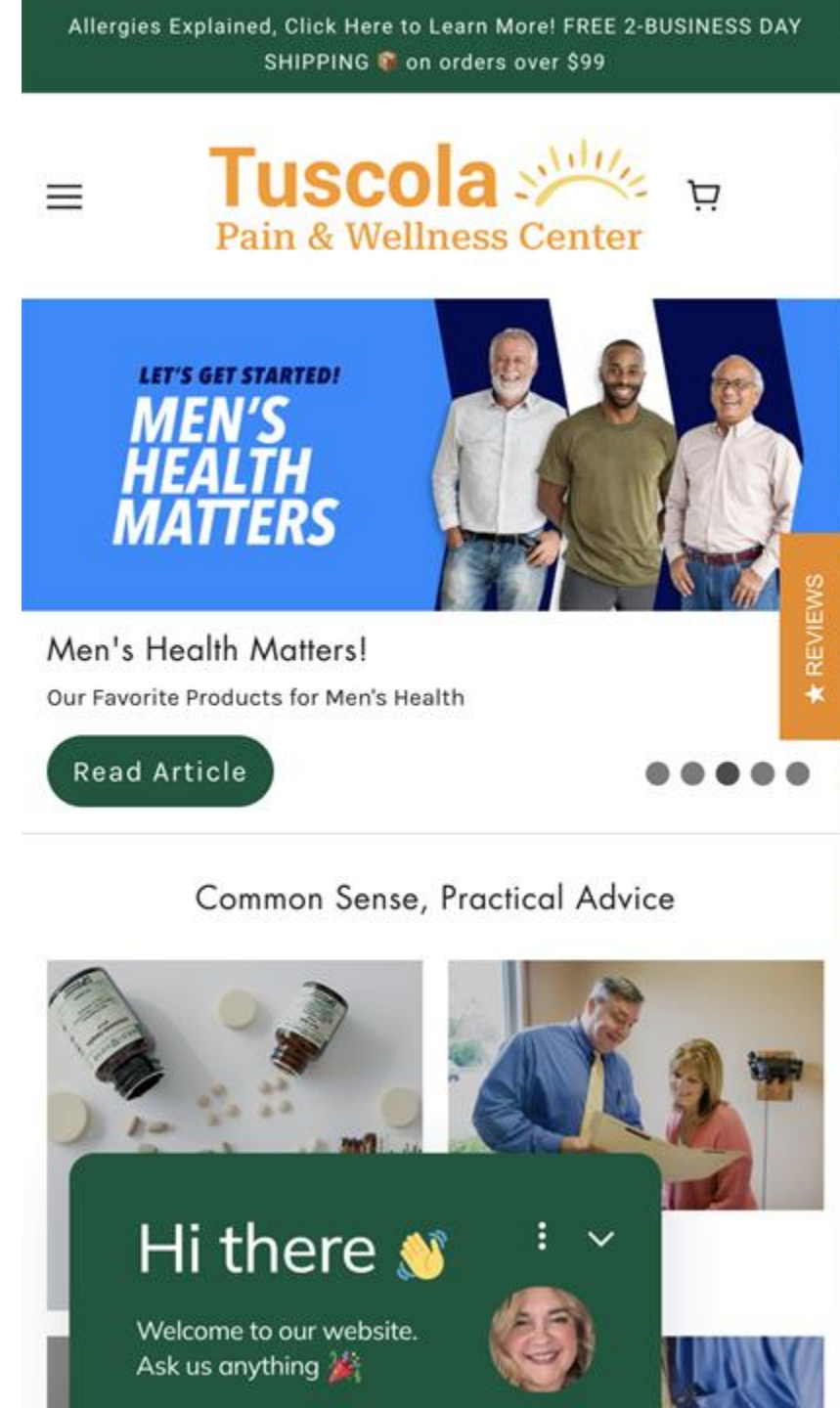
Chiropractic Ethics and Professional Boundaries Plus the Future of Alternative Healthcare Practice with Solutions You Can Use!

Dr. Bill Hemmer



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Meet me.

I provide chiropractic and nutritional services to thousands of individuals every year.

I opened Tuscola Pain & Wellness in 1996.

I specialize Standard Process® and MediHerb® products.

Meet Cindy, my lovely wife!



Meet me.

- Over 37 years in private practice
- Over 27 years in small town of 4500 people
- My practice journey is similar to yours
- I adjust everyone...



Tuscola IL 61953



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Why Me?

- Wrecked my Gut at age 14
- Broke my neck at age 15
- Broke my leg in 3 places at age 16



Broken Neck at 15...

I'm Screwed!

I went to Chiropractic School to help myself then others. Then I was told to hang my diploma and people would flock in! During a Public talk I was asked why I didn't become a "Real Doctor"...



Meet me.

- Over the years, adjustments alone weren't enough anymore
- I added Functional Whole Food Nutrition...people got better faster again
- I added Spaced Repetition Education...people stayed better longer
- I slowly became the local Trusted Authority in Healthy Lifestyle



After 37 years, I've realized it's
not my fault my dreams haven't
been fully materialized!

**2 reasons practice has ALWAYS
been hard.**

**1. We have all endured 115 years of
Western Medicine**

2. No one ever taught us to run a business

3 parts to a successful business

1. Marketing – I knew nothing

2. Operations – I can adjust...wasn't that enough?

3. Finance – Money is like a Wild Animal!

You've been right all along!

- We don't work in healthcare...we work in
Sickness Care**
- We must build a successful business to
accomplish our dreams**

Who do we think we are?

How can we overcome over 115 years of
Western Healthcare that discredits
every successful Natural Healing
methods used for thousands of years?

Plus...

build a business to fulfill your
Dreams?

TOGETHER!



Instead of Doing This

**Hand Patients the Keys to control their
Lifestyle!**

AND

***become their Trusted Authority to help
build and maintain it!***

“You never change things by fighting the
existing reality.

To change something, build a new model
that makes the existing model obsolete.”

— **Buckminster Fuller**

Importance of ethics in chiropractic practice

Lecture objectives:

Understand professional ethical standards

Explore ACA, ICA, and Michigan-specific guidelines

Learn through real-world case studies

Ethical Standards Overview

Organization	Key Ethical Highlights
ACA (American Chiropractic Association)	Patient-centered care; evidence-based practice; clear informed consent; zero tolerance for sexual misconduct; strict confidentiality
ICA (International Chiropractors Association)	Patient welfare priority; integrity in practice; transparency about limitations; professional accountability
Michigan State Chiropractic Regulations	Mandatory ethics training; clearly defined sexual boundary guidelines; adherence to state-specific professional conduct rules

Core Principles of Chiropractic Ethics

- Integrity and Honesty
- Patient Autonomy and Informed Consent
- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Competence and Professional Responsibility
- Boundaries and Professional Relationships

Real World Definitions

Integrity

Integrity in chiropractic practice refers to adherence to moral and ethical principles, soundness of moral character, and maintaining a state of being whole and undiminished in professional conduct. It involves:

1. Acting in the patient's best interests at all times
2. Providing care based on evidence and best practices
3. Maintaining professional competence through ongoing education
4. Demonstrating authenticity and genuineness in patient interactions
5. Upholding high standards of professional and personal conduct

Real World Definitions

Honesty

Honesty in chiropractic ethics is defined as truthfulness, sincerity, and freedom from deceit or fraud. It encompasses:

1. Telling the truth and avoiding intentional falsehoods
2. Providing clear, honest communication about patients' conditions, including potential risks, benefits, and treatment options
3. Admitting mistakes and acknowledging limitations, including referring patients when necessary
4. Offering realistic prognoses, regardless of severity
5. Avoiding misleading patients into false or unjustified expectations of favorable treatment results
6. Accurately representing education, credentials, and professional qualifications

Integrity and Honesty: The Case of Dr. B's Misleading Claims

Dr. B, a chiropractor with 15 years of experience, was struggling to keep her practice afloat in a competitive market. Desperate to attract new patients, she began advertising chiropractic care as a “guaranteed cure” for chronic illnesses, including diabetes and heart disease. She created flashy brochures and a website featuring testimonials from “cured” patients, some of which were fabricated.

A diabetic patient, John, saw Dr. B's ad and discontinued his insulin, believing chiropractic care would cure his condition. John's health rapidly deteriorated, leading to hospitalization. The incident prompted an investigation by the state chiropractic board.

During the hearing, Dr. B admitted to exaggerating claims and fabricating testimonials. She argued that her intentions were good and that she truly believed in chiropractic's potential to help various conditions.

The board found Dr. B in violation of ethical standards regarding honesty and integrity. They suspended her license for six months, mandated ethics training, and required her to issue public retractions of her misleading claims.

This case highlights the critical importance of maintaining integrity and honesty in chiropractic practice, even when facing financial pressures. It demonstrates the potential harm to patients and the profession when practitioners make unsubstantiated claims.

Real World Definitions

Patient Autonomy

○ Patient autonomy in chiropractic ethics refers to the fundamental right of patients to make informed decisions about their own healthcare. It encompasses:

1. Respecting patients' rights to determine what happens to their bodies
2. Empowering patients to actively participate in decision-making regarding their treatment options
3. Recognizing that patients have the ultimate authority in choosing or refusing treatments
4. Ensuring patients are not coerced or unduly influenced in their healthcare decisions
5. Promoting patient involvement in their diagnosis and treatment, rather than deferring entirely to the chiropractor

Real World Definitions

Informed Consent

○ Informed consent in chiropractic practice is a continuous process of communication between the chiropractor and patient, essential for ethical care. It involves:

1. Providing patients with clear, honest, and comprehensive information about:

- . Their condition
- Proposed treatments
- . Potential risks and benefits
- . Available alternatives

Real World Definitions

Informed Consent (cont.)

- 2. Ensuring patients understand the information provided
- 3. Allowing patients to ask questions and receive satisfactory answers
- 4. Obtaining both written and verbal consent before proceeding with treatment
- 5. Documenting the consent process in patient records
- 6. Recognizing that consent is an ongoing process, not a one-time event
- 7. Updating consent when there are changes to the treatment plan or new health complaints

Patient Autonomy and Informed Consent: Dr. C's Paternalistic Approach

Dr. C, a seasoned chiropractor, believed strongly in the benefits of spinal manipulation for treating various conditions. When 28-year-old Sarah came in complaining of mild neck pain, Dr. C immediately recommended a series of aggressive cervical adjustments.

Sarah expressed hesitation, mentioning she had read about potential risks associated with neck manipulations. Dr. C dismissed her concerns, stating, "I've been doing this for 30 years. Trust me, this is what you need."

Without fully explaining the procedure, potential risks, or alternative treatments, Dr. C proceeded with the adjustment. Unfortunately, Sarah experienced a vertebral artery dissection, leading to a stroke.

During the subsequent malpractice lawsuit, it became clear that Dr. C had failed to obtain proper informed consent. He had not adequately explained the risks, benefits, and alternatives to the treatment, nor had he respected Sarah's right to make an informed decision about her care.

The court ruled in Sarah's favor, emphasizing the importance of patient autonomy and informed consent in chiropractic care. This case serves as a stark reminder that patients have the right to be active participants in their healthcare decisions, and chiropractors must provide comprehensive information to allow for truly informed consent.

Real World Definitions

Confidentiality and privacy in chiropractic ethics refer to the practitioner's obligation to protect patient information and respect their right to privacy. This includes:

1. Safeguarding patient records, diagnoses, treatment plans, and personal details
2. Disclosing patient information only to authorized individuals or with explicit patient consent
3. Implementing appropriate safeguards for electronic health records and physical documents
4. Complying with applicable privacy laws and regulations, including HIPAA
5. Maintaining confidentiality in all forms of communication - verbal, written, and electronic

Real World Definitions

6. Refraining from discussing patient information with unauthorized parties, including other patients, visitors, or media

7. Ensuring that all staff members understand and adhere to confidentiality requirements

8. Providing appropriate surroundings for private consultations and discussions

9. Obtaining and recording express consent before sharing personal information about patients

10. Anonymizing data when possible if it can still serve the intended purpose

Chiropractors must balance this duty of confidentiality with legal obligations, such as reporting certain conditions to health authorities or responding to court orders.

Confidentiality and Privacy: The Social Media Mishap of Dr. T

Dr. T, a young chiropractor, was passionate about educating the public about spinal health. She maintained an active social media presence, regularly posting tips and insights about chiropractic care.

One day, excited about a particularly challenging case, Dr. T posted a before-and-after X-ray on her Instagram account, showing dramatic improvement in a patient's spinal alignment. In her enthusiasm, she forgot to remove all identifying information from the image.

A colleague recognized the patient's unique spinal curvature and notified them. The patient, a prominent local business owner who valued their privacy, was horrified to find their medical information shared publicly without consent.

The patient filed a complaint with the state chiropractic board and initiated legal action against Dr. T for breach of confidentiality. During the investigation, it was revealed that Dr. T had not obtained proper consent for sharing patient information and had inadequate protocols for maintaining patient privacy in her social media activities.

The board mandated that Dr. T complete additional training on patient privacy and modern ethical challenges in the digital age. She was also required to implement strict policies for patient consent and information sharing in her practice.

This case illustrates the evolving challenges of maintaining patient confidentiality in the age of social media and the importance of adapting ethical practices to new technologies.

Real World Definitions

Competence

Competence in chiropractic practice refers to:

1. Maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skills through continuous learning and professional development
2. Practicing within the limits of one's own knowledge, skills, and experience
3. Recognizing when to refer patients to other healthcare professionals or seek expertise from colleagues
4. Applying evidence-informed practices and current professional standards in patient care
5. Staying informed about relevant laws, regulations, and professional guidelines

Real World Definitions

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Professional Responsibility

Professional responsibility in chiropractic encompasses:

1. Prioritizing patient health, safety, and welfare above all else
2. Providing high-quality clinical care and maintaining professional standards
3. Being accountable for the intended benefits and outcomes of treatments
4. Collaborating effectively with other healthcare professionals to enhance patient care
5. Reporting and addressing concerns about unethical or incompetent behavior of colleagues

Real World Definitions



Professional Responsibility (cont.)

6. Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with patients
7. Fulfilling the duty of candor by being open and honest with patients, especially when something goes wrong
8. Contributing to the improvement of healthcare services and the chiropractic profession
9. Protecting patient confidentiality and maintaining accurate health records
10. Demonstrating leadership and supporting colleagues in their professional development

Competence and Professional Responsibility: Dr. A's Outdated Practices

Dr. A had been practicing chiropractic for over 40 years and was well-respected in his small town. However, he had become complacent in updating his knowledge and skills, relying heavily on techniques and theories he learned decades ago.


A new patient, Lisa, came to Dr. A with complex symptoms that suggested a potential neurological issue. Dr. A, confident in his experience, diagnosed her with a simple misalignment and began a standard treatment plan without conducting proper neurological tests or referring her to a specialist.

Lisa's condition worsened over the next few months. When she sought a second opinion, an MRI revealed a treatable neurological condition that had been missed due to inadequate initial assessment.

Lisa filed a complaint with the chiropractic board, alleging that Dr. A's outdated practices and failure to refer had delayed her proper diagnosis and treatment. The investigation revealed that Dr. A had not completed any significant continuing education in the past decade and was unaware of current best practices in neurological assessment and interdisciplinary care.

The board required Dr. A to complete extensive continuing education, including courses on current diagnostic techniques and interprofessional collaboration. They also mandated that he work under supervision for a period to ensure his practices were up to date.

This case underscores the ethical obligation of chiropractors to maintain their competence through ongoing education and to recognize the limits of their expertise, referring patients to other professionals when necessary.



Professional Boundaries in Chiropractic Practice

Establishing and Maintaining
Appropriate Professional Boundaries

Real World Definitions



Definition and Importance of Boundaries in Healthcare

Professional boundaries in chiropractic practice refer to the invisible barriers that separate the chiropractor and the patient, ensuring a therapeutic relationship based on trust and respect.

Maintaining these boundaries is crucial for ethical practice, patient safety, and the integrity of the chiropractor-patient relationship.

Real World Challenges

Common Boundary Challenges in Chiropractic Care

1. Dual Relationships: Engaging in business ventures or social interactions with patients can blur professional lines and lead to conflicts of interest.
2. Excessive Personal Disclosure: Sharing too much personal information can create an overly familiar relationship.
3. Physical Boundaries: Inappropriate touch or handling during treatment can lead to boundary violations.
4. Emotional Boundaries: Over-involvement can compromise objectivity and professional detachment.

Real World Challenges

Dual Relationships: When and How to Manage Them

Avoid Conflicts of Interest: Refrain from engaging in business or social relationships with patients.

Professional Guidance: Seek advice if unsure about managing dual relationships.

The Business Partnership Dilemma

Scenario:

Dr. T, a successful chiropractor, is approached by a long-standing patient, Mr. L, with a business proposal. Mr. L wants Dr. T to invest in his new health food store, promising a significant return on investment. Dr. T is tempted by the financial opportunity but recognizes the potential conflict of interest. Accepting the offer could lead patients to question whether Dr. T's recommendations are influenced by his business interests.

Challenge:

Dr. T must decide whether to accept the business offer while maintaining professional integrity and avoiding any appearance of impropriety.

Resolution:

Dr. T declines the offer, explaining to Mr. L that he cannot engage in business ventures with patients due to ethical considerations. He suggests that Mr. L consult with other potential investors who do not have a professional relationship with him. This decision ensures that Dr. T maintains his professional boundaries and avoids any potential conflicts of interest.

Real World Challenges

Excessive personal disclosure:

refers to the act of sharing personal details, such as family issues, financial struggles, or personal health problems, beyond what is necessary or appropriate in a professional setting.

Impact: While some personal disclosure can help build rapport and trust, excessive sharing can blur professional boundaries. Patients may begin to see the chiropractor as a friend rather than a healthcare provider, which can lead to confusion about the nature of their relationship. This can also make patients uncomfortable or feel obligated to reciprocate with their own personal stories, potentially shifting the focus away from their health needs.

The Excessive Personal Exposure Dilemma of Dr. P

Sharing Too Much

Scenario:

Dr. P, a well-liked chiropractor, often shares personal stories with her patients to build rapport. However, she begins to disclose more personal details than necessary, including her marital issues and financial struggles. While her intention is to empathize with patients, this excessive disclosure creates an overly familiar relationship and makes some patients uncomfortable.

Challenge:

Dr. P must balance building a personal connection with maintaining professional boundaries.

Resolution:

Dr. P realizes the need to set boundaries and focuses on sharing only relevant, professional experiences that help patients feel understood without crossing into personal territory. She also seeks guidance from a mentor on how to maintain a professional yet empathetic demeanor.

Real World Challenges



Physical Boundaries:
Appropriate Patient Handling
and Touch

Clear Communication: Explain procedures and expected touch clearly to avoid misunderstandings.

Professional Setting: Conduct treatments in designated professional spaces to maintain a respectful environment.

The Excessive Physical Boundaries dilemma of Dr. R

The Touchy Situation

Scenario:

Dr. R, a skilled chiropractor, is known for his gentle and effective adjustments. However, during a session with a new patient, Ms. D, she expresses discomfort with the amount of touch involved in the treatment. Despite Dr. R's explanation of the procedure, Ms. D feels uneasy and requests minimal contact.

Challenge:

Dr. R must balance providing effective care with respecting Ms. D's physical boundaries.

Resolution:

Dr. R listens attentively to Ms. D's concerns and adapts his treatment approach to minimize touch while still providing effective care. He explains each step clearly and ensures that Ms. D feels in control and respected throughout the process. This approach maintains trust and ensures that Ms. D feels comfortable with her treatment.

Real World Challenges



Emotional Boundaries: Avoiding Over-Involvement

Maintain Detachment: Ensure emotional neutrality to provide unbiased care.

Set Boundaries: Establish clear roles and responsibilities to avoid over-involvement.

The Excessive Emotional Boundaries dilemma of Dr. C

The Overly Attached Patient

Scenario:

Dr. C develops a strong emotional bond with a patient, Mrs. K, who is dealing with chronic pain and personal loss. As their sessions progress, Dr. C finds himself becoming increasingly invested in Mrs. K's personal life, often spending extra time discussing her emotional well-being and offering personal advice.

Challenge:

Dr. C must navigate his desire to help Mrs. K emotionally while maintaining professional detachment.

Resolution:

Dr. C recognizes the need to set emotional boundaries and refers Mrs. K to a counselor who can provide the emotional support she needs. He focuses on providing professional chiropractic care and maintains a supportive yet objective demeanor during their sessions. This approach ensures that Dr. C remains effective in his role while respecting the boundaries necessary for a healthy therapeutic relationship.

Preventing Boundary Violations



Strategies for Clear Communication and Setting Expectations

1. Explain Procedures: Clearly outline what patients can expect during treatments.
2. Establish Roles: Define the roles and responsibilities of both the chiropractor and the patient.
3. Informed Consent: Obtain consent before sharing patient information.

Recognizing Early Warning Signs of Boundary Issues

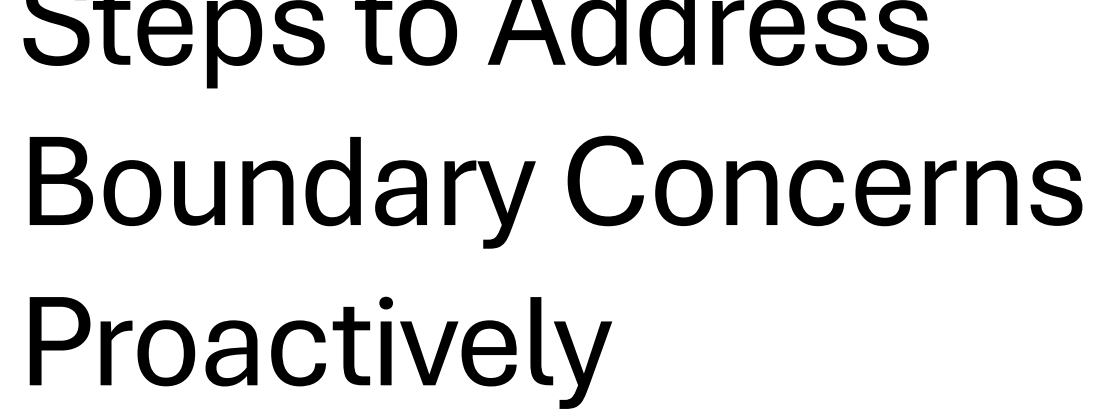
Unusual Behavior:

Be aware of patients who consistently push boundaries or show inappropriate interest.

Personal Comfort:

Pay attention to feelings of discomfort or unease during interactions.

Steps to Address Boundary Concerns Proactively



Seek Guidance:

Consult with peers or professional organizations for advice.

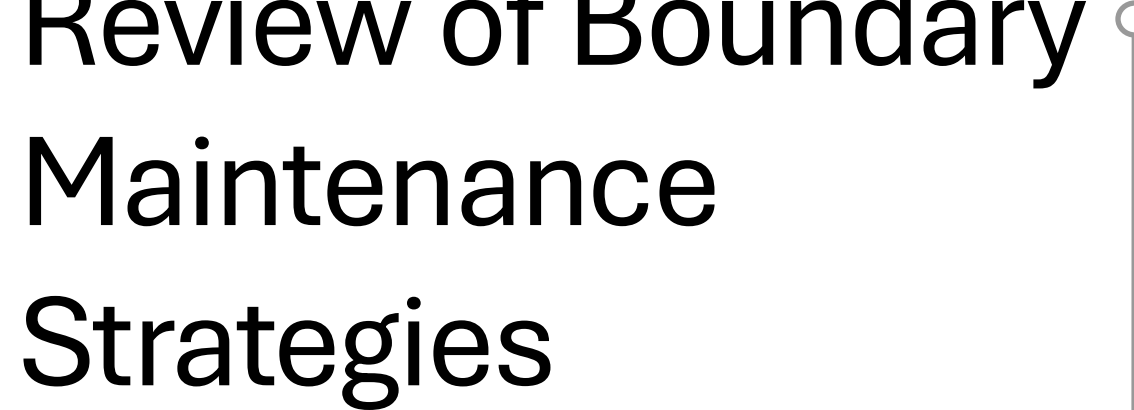
Document Incidents:

Keep detailed records of any boundary-related incidents.

Take Action:

Implement measures to prevent future boundary crossings, such as dismissing the patient if necessary.

Review of Boundary Maintenance Strategies



Professional Setting:

Maintain a professional environment.

Clear Communication:

Set clear expectations and roles.

Emotional Detachment:

Ensure emotional neutrality.

Dual Relationships:

Avoid conflicts of interest.