

Member Feedback Helps Identify the Most Important Boundary Issues for Dietetic Practice



Melisse L. Willems, MA, LLB
Registrar & ED

COLLEGE VALUES

Integrity

Collaboration

Accountability

Transparency

Innovation

It is hard to believe that summer is over and that workshop season is just around the corner. This year, we are excited to be working on the topic of professional boundaries for the workshop series.

Many of you reviewed and commented on the draft [Boundary Guidelines for Professional Therapeutic RD-Client Relationships \(2017\)](#) that will form the basis of the workshops and we thank you for that feedback. As we've worked on this year's workshop presentation, we've been asking ourselves first and foremost "What are the most important things that dietitians need to know about boundaries? Taking into account where dietitians work, who their clients are, and the types of services that dietitians provide, what key guidance can we give to help them identify and navigate through boundary issues?" Your feedback on the draft Boundary Guidelines was helpful, not just to revise them, but also to help answer these questions.

As in previous years, we look forward to hearing from members at the workshops to further shape our understanding. Except for the absolute prohibition against any type of romantic or sexual relationship with a patient, like most professionalism issues, there are few absolutes with professional boundaries. The challenges with boundary issues arise from the fact that context can play a large role in determining whether actions or thoughts are helpful or harmful to the therapeutic relationship. Our practice advisors have been hard at work developing scenarios to best illustrate the concepts of professional boundaries and the importance of context. We are also developing a video series on the topic which will be featured at the workshops.

My hope is that those of you who attend the workshops will leave with a better understanding of the complexities and subtleties of boundary issues, and the knowledge that effectively managing boundaries is at the heart of client-centered care.

Context can play a large role in determining whether actions or thoughts are helpful or harmful to the therapeutic relationship.

