Resource links:

http://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/ethics-articles/Clint_Relationships_and_Ethical_Boundaries_for_Social_Workers_in_Child_Welfare/

https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

http://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/ethics-articles/Clint_Relationships_and_Ethical_Boundaries_for_Social_Workers_inChildWelfare/http://www.rehabworks.org/docs/il/Boundaries_Ethics2010%20.pdf

https://work.chron.com/violations-ethical-boundaries-social-work-7506.html

Mission : *Partnering with youth, adults, and families, St. Mary's Home for Children fosters resilience and potential through a continuum of innovative residential, community-based, education, and prevention services.*

ST. MARY'S HOME FOR CHILDREN

AGENCY CHAT

CHANGE HAPPENS WITH AWARENESS OF TRAUMA

SEPTEMBER, 2020
WORKER / CLIENT BOUNDARIES

We encourage you to take a few minutes to CHAT with your colleagues, friends and/or children as appropriate about important issues we all face in our world, and here at our trauma-informed agency.

Our CHATs are designed to introduce topics and start conversations, not to be a substitute for training or consultation with a professional. Please talk to a professional at St. Mary's if you are concerned or have questions about any of our suggested CHATs.

If you have ideas for an Agency CHAT, please contact any Program Director or the Executive Director. We strive to make CHATs meaningful and relevant to the issues facing children and families, as well as reflecting trauma-informed best practices.

Boundaries: *The limits that allow for a safe connection based on the client's needs.*

The ability to set and maintain good professional boundaries is critical in the social services field. We make decisions about boundaries on a daily basis, and our decisions affect the well being of the client, their family, colleagues & others.

We have many policies to promote, and require, that all staff maintain appropriate boundaries for the benefit of our clients and their families. It's important that we're able to identify when boundaries may have gone astray, and that we report concerns to a supervisor or HR. While it's hard to report concerns about a colleague, we need to keep our client's best interest in mind.

Behavioral signs of violations in the worker / client relationship:

⇒ Worker has given the client their personal email or phone number; has 'friended' them on social media;

⇒ Worker spends frequent time with client at public places outside of the client's home (or even at worker's home) under the guise of a client or family visit;

⇒ Worker enjoys physical connectedness with clients such as hugging or embracing upon contact; uses physical contact to provide comfort and support to the client;

⇒ Worker and client communicate with each other outside the session or work hours, and the worker does not want others to be aware of that fact; keeps secrets and/or asks client to do so.

Ways to set boundaries:

⇒ Do not give out your personal contact information;

⇒ Refrain from discussing your personal life, and seek supervision if a client or their family is persistent in asking personal questions;

⇒ Set forth good social media practices: follow agency policy which does not allow social media contact with current or former clients;

⇒ Establish clear physical boundaries and be mindful of physical touch that occurs; seek supervision for help establishing what is acceptable and what is not.

Social Media and the Internet:

Internet searches can produce information about ourselves, colleagues, clients and their families. Accessing this information can be a breach of ethical expectation to respect the client's privacy, and can also present us with potential ethical dilemmas regarding colleagues.

Tips for Social Media:

⇒ Remind clients that connecting on social media is a breach of privacy for both the worker and the client;

⇒ Whether the person is a current or former client, being a "friend" on social media tampers with privacy and the therapeutic relationship built;

⇒ Do not seek out information about your clients online, this is a breach of privacy and is often not relevant to your work with them.