

Roundtable Discussion for Professionals who are Deaf

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Discussion Questions

- What is a Professional?
- How Do You Define Ethics?
- What Are Professional Boundaries?
- What Is A Role Model?
- What Are The Unique Challenges of Deaf Professionals?
- A Case Example
- Possible Scenarios



What is a Professional?

- A member of a group who share a common field of knowledge & expertise, code of ethics, and concern for their peers
- Has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide a specialized service
- Loyal, truthful, impartial, keeps promises and has respect for others.

What is a Professional?

- Level of skill
- Objectivity
- Recognition of issues
- Asking for assistance
 - Making referrals
 - Peer consultation
- Seek ongoing professional development



How Do You Define Ethics?

- “A system of moral principles, rules and standards of conduct”

(www.bthurston.com/Real_Estate_Dictionary/page_644889.html)

- “The principles of conduct governing an individual or group; concerns for what is right or wrong, good or bad”

(oregonstate.edu/instruct/anth370/gloss.html)

- “the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group”

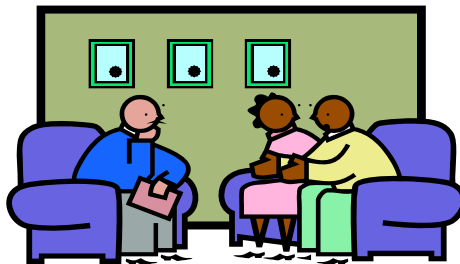
(WordNet, a lexical database for the English language, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, U.S.A.)

What Are Professional Boundaries?

- Line that separates and limits interaction between you & the student/ client
- Gives students the emotional & physical space to focus on their development; not on you
- Limit the professional's power so nobody is hurt
- Set parameters that keep the service provider objective
- Shifts, depending on students' needs

What Are Professional Boundaries?

- In some situations, professionals may have several roles and it may be difficult to maintain clear boundaries
- May be complicated by relationships, e.g. providing services to close friends, former classmates, former colleagues, enemies



What Is A Role Model?

- Somebody who has been successful in his/her profession, and is worthy of imitation
- A person who contributes back to life by sharing what's helped them reach where they are
- Somebody who inspires others to think about what they want to be, and how to reach their goals
- A person who makes him/herself accessible

What Are The Unique Challenges of Deaf Professionals?

- Small deaf community
- Setting boundaries & socialization
- Dual relationships & role overlapping
- Advocating for yourself, while advocating for the customer



A Case Example

“Joe”

- Joe is a graduate, who is now an employee of his university
- As a student, it was easier for Joe to voice his opinions. Now as a professional, he feels less free to express opinions about his employer.
- Joe is experiencing a role shift from student to professional. He used to receive services, but now provides them.
- Joe is working on creating new boundaries with students, exercising confidentiality and responsibility.
- As Joe is closer in age with students, he still empathizes with them. He doesn't have many friends who are young, full-time professionals.
- Other people who remember Joe as a student need to change their perspectives of him.
- Joe feels that the transition from student to professional might be easier if he were in a different work environment.
- Joe's advice: Set yourself up as a role model while a student, and continue that. Socialize with your peers outside of work, not at work, and define your boundaries clearly.

Possible Scenarios

- A student who has been going to you for counseling services asked to borrow some money from you. She describes why she needs the money, and when she would repay you. Would you loan the student the money?
- You are the deaf club advisor. On a Friday afternoon, two students ask if you would like to go to the movies with them on Saturday night. Would you join them?
- A student complains to you about a sign language interpreter who he feels is not competent or professional. You agree that this interpreter needs to improve her skills. Do you share your feelings with the student?

References

- “Ethical Considerations in the Workplace”, presentation by D. Guthmann & M. Kolvitz, Postsecondary Education Consortium, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.
- “Ethical Practices and Postsecondary Settings”, by M. Kolvitz, Postsecondary Education Consortium, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.
- “Advocacy, Prejudice and Role Modeling in the Deaf Community”, by C. Cumming & M. Rodda, University of Alberta, Canada.

Online Resources

- Postsecondary Education Programs- International- www.pen.ntid.rit.edu
- Achieving Goals! Career Stories of Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing- five video series of deaf professionals in a variety of careers, and profiles of deaf adults with tips for career mobility- www.netac.rit.edu/goals/
- Postsecondary Education Programs Network- www.pepnet.org. Go to their Resource Center (PRC) link for a list of products
- Deaf Artists website- www.rit.edu/deafartists
- Deaf Professionals E-Newsletter- www.deafprofessional.net
- Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Loss- www.amphl.org
- Link to listing of organizations for deaf individuals- <http://prc.csun.edu/Content/Links/org.asp>

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