

AOD Peer Worker Boundaries: A Practical Guide

In your introduction explaining your role and what you do as a part of that, perhaps also what you do not do, is a good way to start

"Hi there, my name is I am a peer worker here at this means that I am here for you and I can assist with"

Provide the person you are working with an opportunity to define any boundaries they wish to hold

"Now you've heard some of the things I can and can't do, is there anything that I need to consider when I am working with you?"

Explain your confidentiality, what are the limits to this, including mandatory reporting, reporting on unprescribed drug, or alcohol use, or other organisational expectations

"Everything that we discuss is confidential between you and I, I won't share any aspect of your story unless you say it is ok, except if you tell me about"

Whilst authentically listening with someone try to actively forecast boundary issues before they arise and work these out with the person

"From what you have told me, it sounds like we might need to have a think about how we might handle running into each other in public... OR, how we might handle a mutual acquaintance..."

Protective interruption can be necessary if the person you are working with begins to introduce something, or their behaviours challenge boundaries, then pause the interaction and revisit and perhaps reaffirm boundaries around this with the person

"Hold on there. Before you continue can I remind you of the conversation we had around confidentiality, and that there are some things that I must share with others if you tell me. I want you to understand and have control over what I share so consider this before you go on."

Be prepared to consider your boundaries often, as the complex nature and variety of the people we see will ensure that when you think you have it all worked out- someone or something will arise to test this

(Take a moment to yourself) ... Is what I am doing here helping the person I am with?... Can I explain my choices here to someone else?... Does it feel right?... Do I think anyone would see this is as ethical?

Working out boundaries as an AOD Peer Worker is a process that requires maintenance every now and then. We need to revisit them

"I just wanted to check in with you about how you are going through all of this? Are you comfortable with the support I am providing? Is there anything that you want to bring up or discuss that we could change in the way we do things?"

Remember, clear boundaries are critical in sustaining your ability to do this work in the long term, they also provide protections for those you work with, and for.

The QR Code on the right will link you to an e-learning that unpacks the many concepts and understandings that boundaries for AOD peer workers represents

