



MILITARY CAREGIVING

Military Families Learning Network

Professional Boundaries in Action: Lessons from Practice

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Connecting military family service providers & Cooperative Extension professionals to research & to each other through engaging online learning opportunities

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Today's Presenter(s)



Jen Stewart, MSW

- Deputy Branch Head, Family Care
- Manager, Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), Headquarters Marine Corps



Patricia Smith

- Program Manager
- U.D. Navy Family Readiness Program (FRP)

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OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the Principles of Adult Learning as a Foundation for Appreciating Professional Boundaries.
2. Identify ways to incorporate the Principles of Adult Learning into professional practice.
3. Identify ways the Principles of Adult Learning can support & guide professional boundaries.
4. Identify methods of Reflection to enhance professional interactions & boundaries with others.

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Warm-Up Questions

If you could describe professional boundaries in 1-3 words, what words would you choose?

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○ Why is it important/not important to set professional boundaries?

Warm-Up Questions

Warm-Up Questions

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Name one boundary you have set at work.

2

Name one boundary you would like to set for yourself at work.

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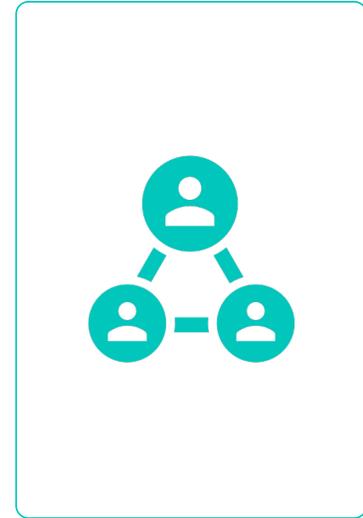
○ Which is most difficult for you at the workplace?

- a) Time management
- b) Establishing healthy relationships
- c) Sharing resources
- d) Leading
- e) Being assertive
- f) Following through on plans
- g) Listening/taking direction
- h) Problem solving

Warm-Up Questions

Warm-Up Questions

- Which is easiest for you in the work place?
- a) Time management
 - b) Establishing healthy relationships
 - c) Sharing resources
 - d) Leading
 - e) Being assertive
 - f) Following through on plans
 - g) Listening/taking direction
 - h) Problem solving



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Setting Professional Boundaries

Self-Empowerment: Often times, we do things for others because we want to feel useful.

- Do our actions enhance or inhibit our personal & professional growth?

Empowering others: Often times, we confuse doing things for others with helping others.

- Do our actions enhance or inhibit the growth of others around us?

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Adult Learning

How can understanding our purpose/intention in a professional relationship impact our ability to effectively communicate & establish boundaries?



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Adult Learning

How can understanding our role as a leader or a learner impact our ability to communicate & establish professional boundaries?



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Adult Learning

How can understanding adult learning principles impact our ability to communicate & establish professional boundaries?



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Brookfield (1986): Principles of Adult Learning

- **Participation is Voluntary:** Adults are engaged in learning as a result of their own volition. The decision to learn is that of the learner's.
- **Respect for self-worth:** Attention is given to increasing an adult's sense of self-worth. Statements or actions that belittle other's self-worth do not produce effective learning.
- **Collaborative Exchange:** Leaders and learners are engaged cooperatively. At different times, & for different purposes, leadership roles will be assumed by different team members.
- **Praxis:** Learners need opportunities to practice what they learn in meaningful contexts. Leaders encourage practice opportunities.
- **Reflection:** Learners need opportunities & encouragement to question and reflect. Leaders stimulate critical reflection.
- **Self-Direction:** The goal of the interaction between the learner & the leader is the self-directed, empowered adult.

* Brookfield, S. D. (1986). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

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Case Study: Linda

Application of the Principles of Adult Learning Theory to
Support & Guide Professional Boundaries

Case Study

- Throughout the following case study, take time to think about when Linda did/did not use the principals of adult learning with her team:
 - Voluntary Participation
 - Respect for self-worth
 - Collaborative exchange
 - Praxis
 - Reflection
 - Self-direction



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Linda was recently promoted within an organization to a management position and now supervises 6 case managers with whom she previously worked with as organizational peers. Prior to her promotion, she routinely ate lunch with 2 of the case managers (Sue and Karen) she now supervises and they would occasionally eat dinner together on Friday after work. She is following both of them on their personal social media accounts and knows all about their families, their hobbies and where they went on their last vacation. Linda believes she got along well with all 6 case managers and considers herself 'friendly' with all of them.

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After several months in her new position, Linda feels that most of the staff have adjusted well to her as the new manager. On occasion some of the staff want to engage in discussion during staff meetings, but this often makes Linda feel that they don't think she's ready to be a manager, so she attempts to be more directive. She also feels she's on the 'outs' with Sue and Karen. She often finds them speaking with one another in the break room, but they abruptly stop talking when Linda walks in. She seems to notice they are making more negative comments about work on their social media accounts, sometimes posting memes about fictional managers. More recently, Linda was surprised when Sue questioned her on a new office policy. Embarrassed and feeling challenged, Linda cut off discussion and simply stated, "I've decided and that's the end of it."

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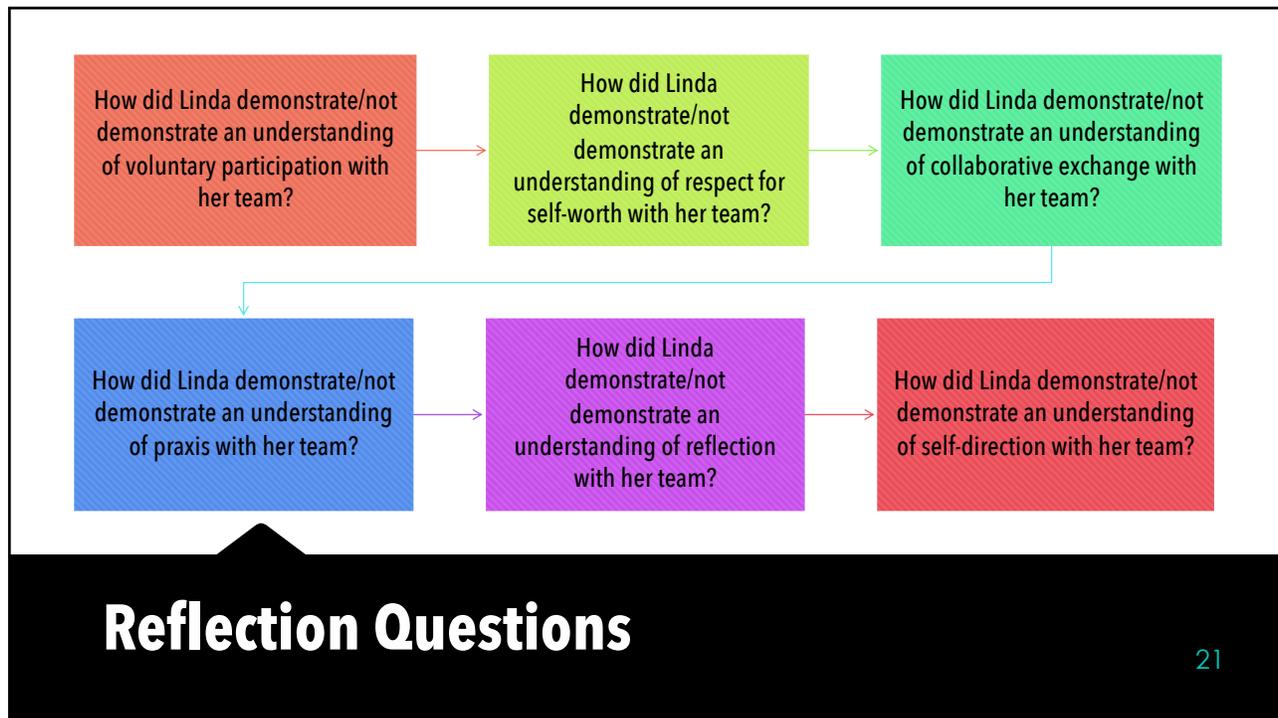
In an effort to improve her relationship with Sue and Karen, Linda invited them to dinner on Friday after work, just like old times. They took several photos of their evening which all three posted to their social media accounts. The next Monday, things seemed back to normal in the office and Linda felt relieved. Sue and Karen both stopped Linda at different times during the week to reminisce about their Friday night out. The remaining four employees simply stopped engaging in discussion at all with Linda, which she took as agreement with her practice and policy. Because everything seemed to be functioning more smoothly at work, Linda reinstated a monthly Friday night dinner with Sue and Karen.

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The following week, Linda conducted her first six month performance review with each employee and her supervisor & received the following feedback:

1. Employees felt disengaged from their work
2. Employees felt Linda valued Sue and Karen over other employees
3. Employees felt they had valuable ideas to contribute, but didn't always feel it was welcomed by Linda
4. Linda had not taken the time to reflect and assess how her personal friendships with Sue and Karen impacted her ability to manage a team

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Reflection

- Is Reflection important in our professional practice? If so, why?
- What questions can stimulate reflection?
- What are some ways you currently reflect upon your professional interactions?
- What are some reflective practices you might like to try?

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1. MFLN is offering 1.0 CEU credit from the UT Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work to credentialed participants.
2. This program has been submitted to The Commission for Case Manager Certification for approval to provide board certified case managers with 1.0 clock hours.
3. MFLN provides a Certificate of Completion for today's participants interested in receiving general training.

Click the link below to receive CE credit or a certificate of completion.



https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_39GbRrT9EB37UoZ

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Upcoming Event!

At Our Best: Caregiving Today | Kids Serve Too!

- Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2019
- Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Eastern

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