

**Dane County Assisted Living Quality Program**  
**PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**

**Definition of Professional Boundaries:** mutually understood, unspoken physical and emotional limits of a relationship between resident and assisted living staff.

- Social relationships differ from caregiver relationships.
- *The boundaries are clear in residential care: the resident needs care; the staff provides care.*
- The caregiver/staff of the home is in a position of power. Residents are physically and/or emotionally vulnerable. Boundaries give each person a sense of legitimate control in the relationship
- The role of assisted living staff is care, advocacy, and the safeguarding of confidential information.
- Residents let caregivers and staff into their homes. Their trust must be protected by careful attention to professional boundaries
- The resident's human dignity, autonomy and privacy are safeguarded by boundaries.
- Staff behavior should promote resident autonomy and self-determination.

**Examples of professional boundary violations:**

- Addressing a resident as “sweetie”, “dear”, “honey”, etc. unless the resident has asked you to address him/her in that way.
- Hugs, kisses, etc. unless a resident asks for or initiates a hug.
- Discussing the resident in front of others
- Physical, financial, sexual or other abuse