

# Professional Development



## OBJECTIVES

**At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:**

- Have awareness of professional boundaries and challenges with disclosure of personal information in the workplace
- Understand the balance of giving and receiving feedback in a professional manner
- Develop strategies to support individual short- and long-term professional and life goals



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before the session, review the notes from the PowerPoint slides
2. Welcome participants and review the objectives.
3. Review PowerPoint slides. See notes for detailed information for conversation facilitation throughout.
4. Wrap up. Share additional resources for ongoing planning and opportunities for CHW professional growth. Encourage participants to talk with their supervisors about professional development opportunities in their community. Encourage them to join CHW and other associations to develop their skills and professional opportunities.



## Related C3 Roles

Cultural mediation among individuals, communities and health and social service systems

## Related C3 Skills

Education and facilitation skills, capacity building skills, advocacy skills



## Method(s) of Instruction

Lecture



## Estimated time

60 minutes



## Key Concepts

CHW professional development, development planning, personal and professional boundaries, CHW professional growth



## Materials

- Computer with internet access and projector
- PowerPoint slides
- Flip chart
- Markers



## Resources

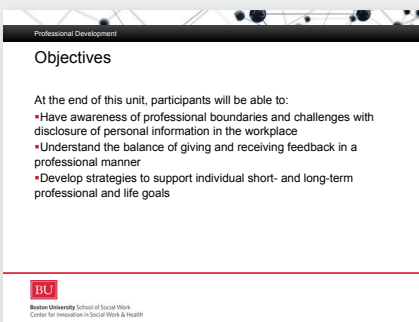
Boundaries at work: <https://study.com/academy/practice/quiz-worksheet-maintaining-boundaries-at-work.jpg>

Communication etiquette: <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/dos-and-donts-business-email-etiquette/>

Improving Public Speaking: Toastmasters International: <https://www.toastmasters.org/>

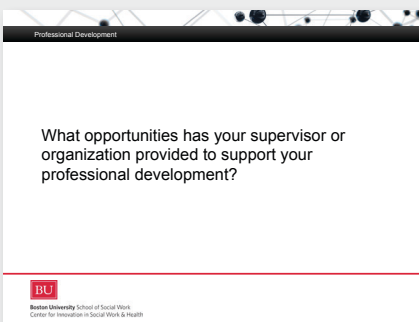


## SLIDE 1



## SLIDE 2

Review the objectives.



## SLIDE 3

Ask participants: What opportunities has your supervisor or organization provided to support your professional development?

Note the responses on the flip chart.

Define professional development: "The process of improving and increasing capabilities of staff through access to education and training opportunities in the workplace, through outside organization, or through watching others perform the job. Professional development helps build and maintain morale of staff members, and is thought to attract higher quality staff to an organization. Also called staff development." (Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/professional-development.html>)

Give examples of professional development:

- Trainings at the agency
- Community meetings
- Advocacy events

CHW certification process is an example of professional development in that the organizations have invested time and resources to send you to the learning/training sessions.

Although a training might be focused on the role of a Community Health Worker, many skills are transferable.


For example, the skill of identifying community resources and building relationships with community partners is not a skill relegated to the role of a CHW; it is a useful skill that can be applied any many different professional positions.

Ask participants for examples of how their agency provides professional development.

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What do you think might be reasons a CHW was passed up for a promotion at their agency?

- A. Presentation of self (dress code)
- B. Written skills
- C. Education
- D. Sharing of personal information
- E. All of the above

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## SLIDE 4

Ask participants, “What do you think might be reasons a CHW was passed up for a promotion at their agency?” (The answer is E)

Briefly discuss why participants chose their response.


Give examples for each response.

1. Presentation of self (dress code).  
Perhaps the CHW’s team was selected to do a presentation for the board of directors and potential funders during a formal dinner event and the CHW dressed in jeans and a t-shirt.
2. Written skills.  
Certain roles require a specific level of literacy skills. Maybe the CHW was challenged with grammar or conveying complete thoughts through writing and was put on a disciplinary plan for poor documentation in patient charts or monthly reports.
3. Education.  
Maybe the CHW’s educational experience doesn’t correspond with the job requirements (certification or degree).
4. Sharing of personal information.  
Perhaps the CHW spent time sharing personal information (not related to the job) that can be intrusive to colleagues or overheard by others. This can lead to the CHW being seen as less than professional.

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Boundaries: What are examples of professional and personal boundaries?

Professional	Personal

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## SLIDE 5

Share with participants: As we continue to explore the topic of professional development, we will note several layers that can facilitate or hinder people who are engaged in this professional growth process. Next, we will address the familiar subject of boundaries

Ask participants, “What are some of the professional and personal boundaries that might impact a person’s professional growth or upward mobility?”

Write the responses on flip chart paper or a whiteboard if available.

Share a few from the list below that may not have been mentioned.

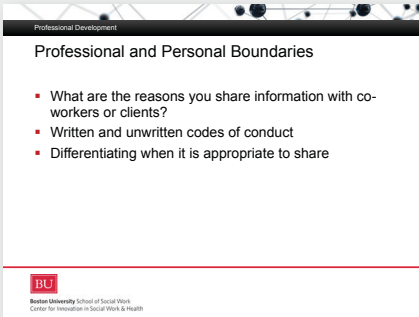
Examples of professional boundaries:

- Loud cellphone ring in the workplace or loud conversations that are intrusive to colleagues
- Showing up tardy regularly due to the relaxed culture of the agency
- Using your colleague’s office supplies without permission
- Volunteering a colleague for tasks when they are not present to speak for themselves

Examples of personal boundaries:

- Repeatedly touching your colleague (on the shoulder or something) when you excitedly share a story
- Using the organization’s office supplies and equipment to make promotional flyers for a personal event
- Repeatedly asking a colleague to pay for your lunch or give you a ride home because . . . (fill in the blank)
- Sharing intimate details about yourself to your colleague
- Asking your colleague to introduce you to their friends

These are examples of breaking professional and personal boundaries that often occur in the workplace. Now let’s look at some things that can help.



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## Professional and Personal Boundaries

- What are the reasons you share information with co-workers or clients?
- Written and unwritten codes of conduct
- Differentiating when it is appropriate to share

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## SLIDE 6

Tell participants: We all have relationships of varying degrees with colleagues. We spend a significant amount of our life with our colleagues, it's important, therefore, to make distinctions that will enable us to honor appropriate professional and personal boundaries and ensure that our relationships do not hinder our professional growth goals.

Ask participants, "Why do we share what we share AND when is it appropriate to share what we share?"

Note responses on the flip chart.

One tool that is helpful for guidance is the organization's *written* and *unwritten* codes of conduct. Many situations are clearly stated. When it's not clear, err on the side of caution using common sense and learned lessons.

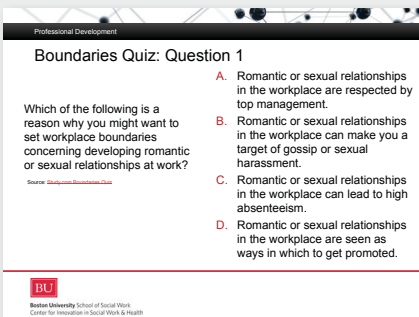
Ask participants, "What are some of the written codes of conduct in your agency? What are some of the unwritten codes of conduct?"

Note responses on the flip chart.

Discuss with participants examples of when it is appropriate to share information: types of services that are helpful to a client, sharing one's HIV status if it is useful, etc. Consider power dynamics in relationships (subordinate to superior).

Ask participants, "Think about what and how you share with a supervisor or colleague and how it might effect their perception of you and your professional development." For example, conduct outside of work at holiday parties, etc.

Note responses on the flip chart.



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## Boundaries Quiz: Question 1

Which of the following is a reason why you might want to set workplace boundaries concerning developing romantic or sexual relationships at work?

Source: <https://www.ck12.org/quiz/workplace-boundaries/>

- A. Romantic or sexual relationships in the workplace are respected by top management.
- B. Romantic or sexual relationships in the workplace can make you a target of gossip or sexual harassment.
- C. Romantic or sexual relationships in the workplace can lead to high absenteeism.
- D. Romantic or sexual relationships in the workplace are seen as ways in which to get promoted.

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## SLIDE 7

Tell participants: Let's see how you would respond in the following scenarios.

Ask for a volunteer to read the question on the slide.

Ask participants for a show of hands for each answer, A–D.

The correct answer is B.

Facilitate a brief discussion about the quiz.

Source: <https://study.com/academy/practice/quiz-worksheet-maintaining-boundaries-at-work.jpg>

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### Boundaries Quiz: Question 2

- A colleague is telling you in graphic detail about a romantic evening they had with their partner. You are not interested in hearing this information. Which of the following would be an appropriate response to set up a communication boundary?

- A. So, what was the best part, if you don't mind me asking?
- B. To tell you the truth, I wish I could have an evening like that myself.
- C. I really don't want to hear these details about your evening; please don't share them with me again.
- D. You know, I can't talk right now but I want to hear more about this at lunch.

Source: <https://study.com/academy/practice/quiz-worksheet-maintaining-boundaries-at-work.jpg>

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## SLIDE 8

Ask for a volunteer to read the scenario.

Ask participants for a show of hands for each answer, A–D.

Ask participants to justify their selection.

In this scenario, C would be the best choice because you are not comfortable with this information.

If there is time, brainstorm some other appropriate ways to respond, and write them on the flip chart.

Source: <https://study.com/academy/practice/quiz-worksheet-maintaining-boundaries-at-work.jpg>

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### Boundaries Quiz: Question 3

- You and your coworker had a disagreement about a personal matter outside of the office. When it comes to workplace friendships, which of the following statements can be identified as an appropriate response that would reinforce an effective boundary that was put into place?

- A. I'm really mad at you, so let's continue this conversation at my cubicle tomorrow.
- B. What happens outside of the office needs to stay outside of the office.
- C. I'll just keep calling your work phone until you answer me.
- D. I'm going to tell your boss about what happened today. I'm sure they won't appreciate that.

Source: <https://study.com/academy/practice/quiz-worksheet-maintaining-boundaries-at-work.jpg>

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## SLIDE 9

Ask for a volunteer to reach the scenario.

Ask participants for a show of hands for each answer, A–D.

Ask participants to justify their selection.

In this scenario, B would be the best choice because you are not comfortable with this information.

If there is time, brainstorm some other appropriate ways to respond, and write them on the flip chart.

Source: <https://study.com/academy/practice/quiz-worksheet-maintaining-boundaries-at-work.jpg>

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### Boundaries Quiz: Question 4

- A co-worker is experiencing a serious mental health distress about an ongoing circumstance and is seeking your advice. Which of the following would be an appropriate response to maintain a workplace boundary?

- A. Assure your co-worker and give them advice about their circumstance.
- B. Tell your co-worker you are sorry but you can't talk about it right now.
- C. Remind your co-worker of agency resources like talking with a supervisor, Human Resources or using Healthcare or Employee Assistance Program benefits.

Source: <https://study.com/academy/practice/quiz-worksheet-maintaining-boundaries-at-work.jpg>

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## SLIDE 10

Ask for a volunteer to reach the scenario.

Ask participants for a show of hands for each answer, A–D.

Ask participants to justify their selection.

In this scenario, C would be the best choice to demonstrate compassion for the situation while still maintaining boundaries.

If there is time, brainstorm some other appropriate ways to respond, and write them on the flip chart.

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### Boundaries Quiz: Question 5

- Your co-worker has trouble completing their assigned task and repeatedly asks you for help. You provide help, but doing so is hindering completion of your assigned work tasks. Which of the following would be an appropriate response to set up a workplace boundary?

- A. Tell your co-worker you don't know how to help them with their task.
- B. Tell your co-worker you will help them, but intentionally do the task incorrectly.
- C. Tell your co-worker you need to focus on your completing your tasks.
- D. Tell your supervisor that your co-worker keeps asking you for help. You ask the supervisor to send your co-worker to get training to do their job.

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## SLIDE 11

Ask for a volunteer to reach the scenario.

Ask participants for a show of hands for each answer, A–D.

Ask participants to justify their selection.


In this scenario, C would be the best choice as you cannot take on your coworker's tasks or be responsible for their performance.

If there is time, brainstorm some other appropriate ways to respond, and write them on the flip chart.

Thank participants for their participation. Tell participants that we have addressed the first objective to increase awareness of professional boundaries and challenges with disclosure of personal information in the workplace, all with the purpose of keeping in mind how to position one's self for the greatest professional success. Now we will look at some things to consider regarding communication.

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### Codeswitching



Codeswitching is defined as process of shifting from one linguistic code (a language or dialect)

Can you share places where codeswitching might occur?

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## SLIDE 12

Tell participants: We wear multiple hats, sometimes simultaneously. One example is facilitating communication with a provider and a client in a session. Having the skill to effectively communicate with both seamlessly can be called codeswitching.

Additional examples:

- Dressing and talking differently based on who you are working with.
- Interacting with people differently based on the environment.
- Speaking in a language that the client would understand.
- Dressing differently depending on the situation, for example, wearing jeans if teaching someone how to clean their apartment versus business casual attire in an office.

Ask participants, "Can you share places where codeswitching might occur?"

Note responses on the flip chart.

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### Code-Switching

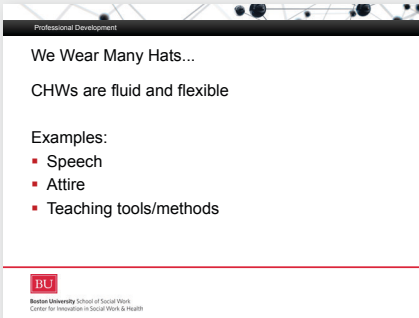
PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It opens up many opportunities for the code-switcher.</li><li>It allows the code-switcher to become a cultural connector.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Can lead to feelings of resentment</li><li>The code-switcher may feel inauthentic</li><li>It can feel exclusionary to others</li></ul>

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## SLIDE 13

Review the slide.

There are pros and cons to this style of communicating. Code-switching for many people is an effective communication strategy, but it can have some drawbacks.



## SLIDE 14

Tell participants: Code-switching punctuates the fact that as a CHW, we wear many hats. Wearing multiple hats has cultivated skills that are desirable for expanding professional growth opportunities. They are worthy of noting here.

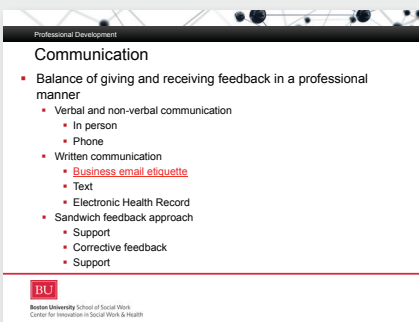
For example, being fluid and flexible (examples speech, attire, teaching tools/methods)

Demonstrating flexibility in how we communicate and present ourselves to foster best outcomes with clients and co-workers/providers (e.g., We often mirror cultural norms)

We use appropriate teaching tools and methods to communicate information in the ways that are most easily understood.

Ask participants if they think of ways they are flexible in each one of these areas:

- Speech?
- How they dress?
- Teaching tools?
- With clients?
- With other members of the care team?



## SLIDE 15

Tell participants: How we communicate is an important element of professional development. Let's review some of the types of communication and etiquette for professional development.

Be mindful of how you communicate with people (language and tone) whether it's in person, or over the phone, or email.

Email: Resource for etiquette: Resource for email etiquette

<https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/dos-and-donts-business-email-etiquette/>

Keep in mind what is not appropriate for professional correspondence vs. a personal relationship (e.g. emojis, casual salutations, text lingo).

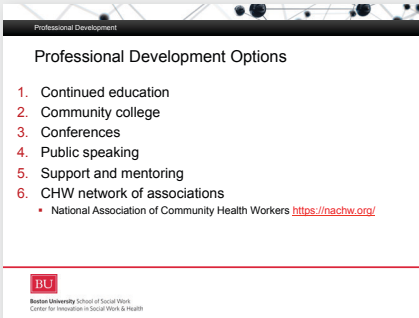
Think about the time, for example sending a text in the early evening to remind someone to take medication that night vs. a more vague text late at night to ask how they are doing—it can be misinterpreted.

Electronic Health Record: Be careful of how you document a client's health record as it is a legal record that can be subpoenaed.

Describe the three steps of the sandwich feedback approach:

- Give support
- Provide corrective feedback
- Give support again

Example: When a client has breached a boundary. Your comment shows a sensitive and open side to your personality. However, it's important that we maintain a professional relationship.



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### Professional Development Options

1. Continued education
2. Community college
3. Conferences
4. Public speaking
5. Support and mentoring
6. CHW network of associations
  - National Association of Community Health Workers <https://nachw.org/>

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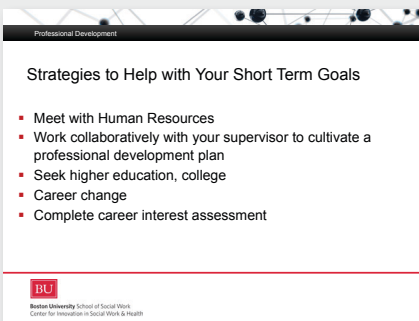
## SLIDE 16

Tell participants—the final aspect to consider in professional development is to look for opportunities to grow our skills.

This could be through:

- Attending courses or a program at colleges/universities
- Participating in certificate programs
- Sign up for public speaking training such as Toastmasters club (<https://www.toastmasters.org/>)

Visit the website for the National Association of Community Health Workers to become part of a network and learn about opportunities.



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### Strategies to Help with Your Short Term Goals

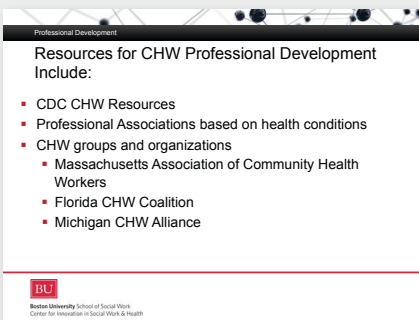
- Meet with Human Resources
- Work collaboratively with your supervisor to cultivate a professional development plan
- Seek higher education, college
- Career change
- Complete career interest assessment

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## SLIDE 17

Ask participants, “What is your plan for professional development?”

Review the strategies on the slide, and write others on the flip chart.



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### Resources for CHW Professional Development Include:

- CDC CHW Resources
- Professional Associations based on health conditions
- CHW groups and organizations
  - Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers
  - Florida CHW Coalition
  - Michigan CHW Alliance

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## SLIDE 18

Share additional resources to help CHWs connect with people who are doing similar work or to learn about job opportunities and ways to grow professionally.



# Acknowledgements

This curricula draws from and is adapted from other training curricula for peer educators and community health workers, such as the Building Blocks to Peer Success (<https://ciswh.org/resources/HIV-peer-training-toolkit>) and the Community Capacitation Center, Multnomah County Health Department (<https://multco.us/health/community-health/community-capacitation-center>)

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