



Thursday, May 21, 2026
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Dawn M. Hughes, Ph.D., ABPP, is a licensed clinical psychologist and board-certified forensic psychologist specializing in the assessment and treatment of interpersonal violence and traumatic stress. Dr. Hughes maintains an independent practice in clinical and forensic psychology in New York City and serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical Center – New York Presbyterian Hospital, where she participates in the psychology teaching faculty, provides clinical supervision, and conducts ethics training sessions for interns. Dr. Hughes has 30 years of experience in the field of traumatic stress and interpersonal violence, including intimate partner violence, rape, sexual assault, adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and other non-interpersonal traumatic experiences. She holds distinctions and memberships in numerous professional organizations and is a past president of the Trauma Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association. Her forensic work comprises comprehensive psychological evaluations, attorney consultations, and expert witness testimony in forensic psychology, interpersonal violence, and traumatic stress. Dr. Hughes has served as an expert witness in many high-profile matters and has been admitted as an expert forensic psychologist in state and federal courts across the country in civil and criminal cases involving psychological impairments, intimate partner violence, rape and sexual assault, sex trafficking, childhood sexual abuse, clergy abuse, Boy Scout abuse, cult abuse, educator abuse, workplace sexual harassment, and wrongful conviction.

ETHICAL, CLINICAL, AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

 **THIS CE CREDIT FULLFILLS AN ETHICS REQUIREMENT** 

ABSTRACT

This course is designed to fulfill one hour of the New York State Education Department requirement for mental health professionals to receive a total of three hours of training on maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with our patients. Therapeutic boundaries are the guidelines that define the professional relationship, providing structure and safety for our patients. Boundary crossings and boundary violations can harm clients, and our job is to identify that risk and mitigate that harm. This talk addresses ethical and professional considerations regarding establishing boundaries at the outset of treatment and throughout, differentiating between boundary crossings and violations and the risks of each, concerns regarding multiple relationships and dual roles, monitoring self-disclosure, and increasing awareness of countertransference issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Differentiate between boundary crossings and boundary violations, including key defining features of each.
2. Identify common clinical situations in which boundary issues may arise during the course of psychotherapy.
3. Recognize therapist and patient vulnerabilities that may contribute to the risk of boundary crossings and violations.
4. Identify the legal, ethical, and clinical standards that require establishing appropriate boundaries in psychotherapy.

This event fulfills 1 CE credit hour towards the New York State Education Department requirement of 3 CE hours in Professional Ethics for Psychologists, Social Workers and LMHCs.

REFERENCES

1. Jain, S., & Roberts, L. W. (2009). Ethics in Psychotherapy: A focus on professional boundaries and confidentiality practices. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 32(2), 299–314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2009.03.005>
2. James, G., Schröder, T., & De Boos, D. (2022). Changing to remote psychological therapy during COVID-19: Psychological therapists' experience of the working alliance, therapeutic boundaries and work involvement. *Psychology and Psychotherapy Theory Research and Practice*, 95(4), 970–989. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12413>
3. Mishkind, M., Shore, J. H., Barrett, R., Caudill, R., Chiu, A., Hilty, D., Idigo, O. B., Kaftarian, E., Khan, S., Krupinski, E. A., Malik, T. S., Thackaberry, J., Torous, J., & Yellowlees, P. (2023). Resource Document on Best Practices in Synchronous Videoconferencing-Based Telemental Health. *Telemedicine Journal and e-Health*, 30(5), 1330–1340. <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2023.0174>

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