

Wisconsin Public Psychiatry Network Teleconference (WPPNT)

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WPPNT Reminders

How to join the Zoom webinar

- **Online:** <https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1606358142>
- **Phone:** 669-254-5252
- Enter the Webinar ID: 160 635 8142#.
 - Press # again to join. (There is no participant ID)

Reminders for participants

- Join online or by phone by 11 a.m. Central and wait for the host to start the webinar. Your camera and audio/microphone are disabled.
- The evaluation survey opens at 11:59 a.m. the day of the presentation. A link to the evaluation survey is posted when the materials are posted.
- Ask questions to the presenter(s) in the Zoom Q&A window. Each presenter will decide when to address questions. People who join by phone cannot ask questions.
- Use Zoom chat to communicate with the WPPNT coordinator or to share information related to the presentation.
- [Participate live to earn continuing education hours](#) (CEHs). Complete the evaluation survey within two weeks of the live presentation and confirmation of your CEH will be returned by email.
- A link to the video recording of the presentation is posted within four business days of the presentation.
- Presentation materials, evaluations, and video recordings are on the WPPNT webpage: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wppnt/2025.htm>

BOUNDARIES THAT BUILD TRUST

Serving Refugee & Immigrant Populations in a Global
Neighborhood

Dr. Todd M. Sigler

EMAIL: todd@DiverseAssessments.org

BUSINESS CELL: 612-688-1909 (VOICE/TEXT)

CLINIC WEB SITE: <https://www.DiverseAssessments.org>

ROSEVILLE, MN

Learning Objectives

- **Identify**

- Recognize key ethical and boundary issues that commonly arise when providing mental health or substance use prevention, intervention, or recovery services to immigrant and refugee clients in Wisconsin.

- **Understand**

- Describe cultural values, communication styles, and service delivery considerations for several major refugee groups in Wisconsin and explain how these factors influence professional relationships and decision making.

- **Apply**

- Use practical, culturally responsive tools and strategies to navigate ethical dilemmas and maintain clear, respectful boundaries in cross cultural mental health and recovery work.

WHY THIS MATTERS ...

- Wisconsin's demographics are changing.
- Trust is the foundation of effective care.

Poll #1

What's your biggest challenge in cross-cultural work: language, boundaries, ethics, or cultural knowledge?

Wisconsin's Refugee & Immigrant Landscape



Who Is Arriving Now?

- **Myanmar** (Burma) – ~570 arrivals
- **Democratic Republic of Congo** – ~535 arrivals
- **Venezuela** – ~175 arrivals
- **Somalia** – ~105 arrivals
- **Syria** – ~94 arrivals

Who Calls Wisconsin Home?

- **Mexico**
- **India**
- **China** (incl. Hong Kong & Taiwan)
- **Laos/Hmong**
- **Philippines**
- **Germany**
- **Vietnam**
- **Somalia** (~1,700 residents)
- **Ukraine** (~2,100 residents)
- **Iraq** (~1,600 residents)

What Are Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are the clear limits that keep provider-client relationships safe, ethical, and focused on the client's needs.

Why Boundaries Matter





Boundaries matter because they protect clients, preserve provider objectivity, and create the trust and safety needed for healing and recovery.

Common Pitfalls

- Over identification with clients
- Dual relationships (social, financial, spiritual)
- Cultural misunderstandings (e.g., gift giving, hospitality norms)

Case Vignette: The Gift of Hospitality

How would you respond in this situation?

- 1)  Accept the food to honor the client's culture and avoid offending them.
- 2)  Politely decline, explaining that professional ethics prevent you from accepting gifts.
- 3)  Thank them warmly, decline the food, and explain why—while affirming their generosity and cultural values.
- 4)  Accept the food this time, but clarify in the next session that it can't become a regular practice.

Poll #2

How would you respond to this situation.

Boundaries That Build Trust: 3 Pillars

- **Clarity** (explain your role, limits, confidentiality)
- **Consistency** (apply rules fairly across clients)
- **Cultural Responsiveness** (adapt delivery without compromising ethics)

Concrete Strategies

- Use interpreters effectively
- Normalize boundary explanations (*"I can't accept gifts, but I deeply appreciate your kindness"*)
- Document cultural considerations in ethical decision making

Do's And Don'ts: In Cross-cultural Ethics & Boundaries

Do's

- Explain your role, limits, and confidentiality clearly from the start
- Use interpreters professionally and brief them on confidentiality
- Show respect for cultural practices while maintaining ethical standards

Don'ts

- Assume clients understand U.S. service systems or professional roles
- Rely on family members (especially children) to interpret sensitive information
- Accept gifts, money, or favors that blur professional boundaries

Do's and Don'ts: In Cross-Cultural Ethics & Boundaries

Do's

- Document cultural considerations in your ethical decision-making
- Normalize boundary explanations with warmth and cultural humility
- Seek supervision or consultation when dilemmas arise

Don'ts

- Keep “special arrangements” or secrets with clients outside the record
- Avoid difficult conversations about limits for fear of offending
- Try to “go it alone” when facing ethical or cultural uncertainty

Case Study: Confidentiality Across Cultures

You are providing counseling to a recently arrived refugee client from a collectivist culture. The client shares sensitive details about their trauma history. At the next session, their adult sibling arrives and says: *"In our family, we share everything. Please tell me what my brother/sister said so I can help them."*

You know confidentiality is central to your professional ethics, but you also recognize that in many cultures, family involvement is expected and valued.

Poll #3

How would you respond in this situation?

Case Study: The Familiar Face

You are a substance use counselor in a mid-sized Wisconsin town. A new client is referred to you for treatment. When they arrive, you realize they are the cousin of a close friend from your local immigrant community. The client greets you warmly and says, "It's so good to see someone who knows my family. I'll feel safer sharing with you."

You now face a dilemma: continuing could blur personal and professional boundaries, but referring out may feel like a rejection to the client.

Poll #4

How would you respond in this situation?

Key Take Aways

- **Identify**

- Recognize where cross-cultural challenges arise: language, boundaries, ethics, and cultural knowledge.

- **Understand**

- See how cultural values and professional ethics can intersect—and sometimes collide.
- Appreciate that clear boundaries build trust, not distance.

- **Apply**

- Use cultural humility + ethical clarity in daily practice.
- Normalize boundary conversations with warmth and respect.
- Seek supervision/consultation when dilemmas feel complex.

Resources

- **State Refugee Resettlement Office**
- Wisconsin Department of Children & Families – Refugee Services
 dcf.wisconsin.gov/refugee
- **Professional Codes of Ethics**
- NAADAC: Code of Ethics for Addiction Professionals
 naadac.org/code-of-ethics

Resources

- AMHCA: Code of Ethics for Clinical Mental Health Counselors
👉 amhca.org/events/publications/ethics
- NAATP: Code of Ethics for Addiction Treatment Providers
👉 naatp.org/code-ethics
- **Cultural Orientation Resources**
- Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE) – training, curricula, and tools
👉 coresourceexchange.org
- COR Center Orientation Toolkit – lesson plans, videos, and provider resources
👉 culturalorientation.net/providing-orientation/toolkit

Thank you!