

Maintaining Boundaries

Trinity Care Team - August 2021

Trinity Care Team Mission:

To be prayerful in all that we do as we offer support to our parishioners and beyond

- ▶ Trustworthy
- ▶ Compassionate
- ▶ Prayerful/Faithful
- ▶ Always maintaining confidentiality

Housekeeping – Requirements

Calls: Safe Church training

Rides to church: Safe Church training and a background check. Once these are complete, your name will be added to the Trinity Scheduler

Rides elsewhere: Safe Church training and a background check. We will assess on an individual basis if need can be met with this ministry.

Let us pray . . .

Lord Jesus, you share our burdens and lighten them when we feel crushed by all the problems life can pile on us. You went to the cross to relieve us of the burden of our sin and death. You have promised that we will not only share your yoke, but will also share your victory over sin and death. Thank you for loving us so. Build us up with your love and make us so strong and secure in you that we have the strength not only to carry our daily load but also to bear other's burdens.

Amen.

On Boundaries: Some Conversation-Starters . . .

- Think of a time when you feel you felt uncomfortable because of a boundary issue between you and someone else. . .

So, What made you uncomfortable. . . ?

Some examples:

- Neighbor borrowing tools and not returning them
- Meeting with a friend who is constantly late
- People who stay too late or arrive too early
- Someone talking about a mutual friend/acquaintance behind their back

God wants us to care for each other...

Galations 6:2,5

“... Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ ... for all must carry their own loads ... ”

Some definitions to keep in mind. . .

- **Burden** (Greek) - something that is heavy & troublesome
- **Load** (Greek) - “cargo”, or normal daily weight a person carries
- **Servitude** - connotes bondage, slavery, involuntary
- **Servanthood** - acting out of a sense of commitment & love

Some definitions to keep in mind. . .

- **Burden vs. Load**

A burden is not a load

- **Servanthood vs. Servitude**

Servanthood is not servitude

God wants us to care for ourselves, too. . .

If people in Christian community don't have clear personal boundaries and limits, they get weighed down and walked on.

Eventually, they will start having issues with anger, resentment, stress overload or burnout. We just can't try to be helpful and caring all the time!

It is not only healthy, but also holy... to learn to say no to people, speak the truth in love, and live within our personal limitations.

*- based on the writings of Bill Gaultiere,
www.soulshpherd.org*

Boundaries within the Trinity Care Team

- *Refrain from giving advice*
- *Maintain confidentiality*
- *Manage expectations*
- *Protect you own personal boundaries*

Calls and Rides

We are all busy and there is a lot of “noise” in our lives. It will be necessary to ground yourself and remind yourself you need to be in the moment for the person you are going to call/drive. Beforehand, consider praying in whatever way is helpful for you to become centered and focused.

Most of the time, calls and rides will go smoothly, but once in awhile, they might be challenging. The following scenarios are just food for thought for unexpected turns in a conversation.

Scenario 1

You are driving someone to a doctor's appointment. The person nonchalantly says, "I heard that your son is having some issues in school. What's up with that?"

Is this a boundary violation? What do you say?

Scenario 1

It depends. This CAN be a boundary violation if you are not comfortable talking about this with a fellow parishioner.

What do you say if it is a boundary violation for you?

Deflection - “Thanks so much for your concern. We are working through it. How are things with your family?”

Assertiveness - “ Thanks for asking, but I’m not really comfortable talking about it right now. I hope you understand. How about we talk about something else?”

Scenario 2

You are talking with someone on the phone. It is clear from your conversation that the person is lonely and doesn't want to hang up.

Could this become a boundary violation? How do you extricate yourself from the phone call?

Scenario 2

If you have a set amount of time to commit to making calls (which you should!), then this would become a boundary violation.

How do you extricate yourself from the phone call? You can simply state the obvious, “Wow, you have so much to say, more than we can get to in this call. Would it be possible to give you a call back (next week, in a few weeks, whatever timeframe seems right)?”

Scenario 3

You have just arrived at the doctor's office. The parishioner turns to you and says, "You are coming inside with me, right? I don't think I can do this alone."

Is this request within the boundaries of the Trinity Care Team? How should you respond?

Scenario 3

There are privacy concerns around a person's health information, so we do not want to go down this path. What you CAN do is offer to help them into the office and wait in the waiting room. If someone really needs another person to accompany them into the actual appointment, that is not within the boundaries of this ministry.

Scenario 4

You have been on the phone with someone for a few minutes when they start disparaging the church or the pastor.

In what way could this become a boundary violation? What can you say in response?

Scenario 4

There is a line between venting and something more toxic.

Some ways to respond:

“I’m sorry you feel that way.”

“I am really not the person you should be talking to about this but I can pass along the information to the wardens/Pastor Andrea”

“Have you considered talking to the wardens/Pastor Andrea?)”

Scenario 5

You are dropping off someone at home after returning from their doctor appointment. They mention that they have a leak in their kitchen sink and no plumber they call will come to the house. They are wondering if you can take a quick look at it.

Is this request within the boundaries of the Trinity Care Team? How should you respond?

Scenario 5

This is not really within the boundaries of the ministry.

Responses:

Acknowledge the frustration they are feeling.

You might offer your own plumber's phone number (if you have one).

Most of the time, you can defer and state you have no experience in this area.

Scenario 6

You are on the phone with a parishioner and they have shared that they are very worried with a situation concerning their sibling and they don't know what to do. They then ask what you would do if you were in their shoes.

How can this become a boundary violation? Response?

Scenario 6

The boundary violation occurs when we offer up personal advice.

Responses:

Acknowledge how they are feeling.

“I don’t know what I would do.”

“Have you thought of any options? What are some possibilities?”

(Talking aloud can be helpful.)

Scenario 7

You are in the car when suddenly the person you are driving says, “Hey, I heard something juicy about parishioner X. Turns out they had one too many Saturday night and got pulled over for a DUI” .

Thoughts?

Scenario 7

*This is public information (Police Blotter in the local paper),
but this is also gossip.*

Possible responses:

“I’m very sorry to hear about that” and deflect

“I’m really not comfortable talking about this, let’s change the subject”

“Why don’t we say a prayer for the family? Will you pray with me?”

Things to remember

If you hear something of concern, an appropriate response is always, “Have you considered talking to Pastor Andrea?” Or “Would it be okay if I share this with Pastor Andrea?”

Obtaining permission to share is showing you respect confidentiality.

Things to remember (cont.)

On the phone, a respectful question (if appropriate) and a way to start wrapping up a call is, “Would you be interested in a follow-up call in x days/weeks?”, or “Can I check in with you in x days/weeks?”

The timeframe will be determined prior to you making the call.

A final round of conversation . . .

Reflecting on our time together . . .

- *What is your single most key take-away learning from this session?*

Thank you,
good and faithful servants!