

## The Challenge of Maintaining Boundaries in Small Communities

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In a small community you may start out 'on the dance floor' of a patient or client and their family. If that is the case, there are questions you need to ask, issues you need to be aware of and to reassess as needed. The following are questions to consider when you will be working in a dual role as a caregiver.

### Dual Roles

- Are you comfortable and competent playing two roles, i.e., that of nurse, health care worker or volunteer AND friend or family member?
- Is the family comfortable with you playing both roles?
- What are their options if you or the family are not comfortable with this arrangement?

### History

Given your history with the family:

- Can you work with integrity and show respect and compassion to all of the people involved?
- Can you be objective when necessary and work from a neutral place without taking sides in family conflicts or when decisions need to be made?
- Does the family see you as being capable of being neutral?

### Role clarification

- How will the family and client know which role you are in at any given time? I.e., How will they know when are you visiting as a friend/family member and when are you visiting in the capacity of your work related role?)

### Plan B

- What is your 'Plan B' if there comes a time when playing two roles does not work for you or for the client and family? I.e., when you want or need to be the grieving friend or family member and not the nurse or home support worker?

### Personal issues

- What is the plan if the family wants someone else to talk to about personal issues, i.e., is there someone who is not invested in the relationship like you are?

### Team questions

- How will your colleagues and team members know, for example, in discussions about care plans, whether you are sharing your perspective as a health care worker or primarily as a friend or family member?