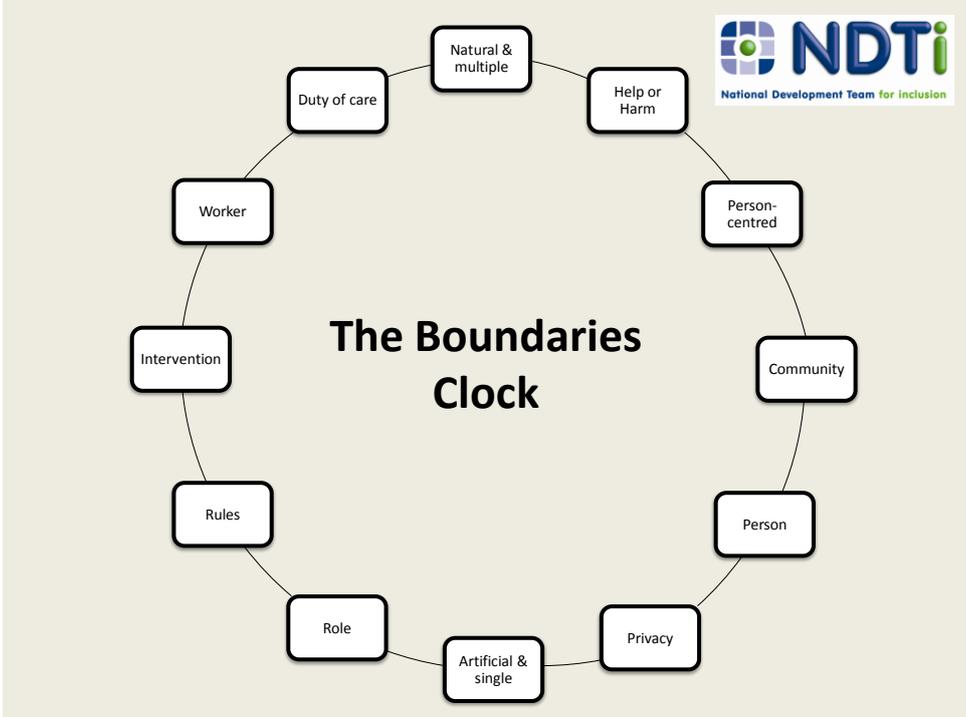


# Introducing the *Boundaries Clock*

Six pairs of competing priorities are set in opposition to one another to form the twelve-point *Boundary Clock*<sup>1</sup>. Individual case studies can then be placed on the ‘clockface’ and the twelve vantage points used in turn to generate ideas for shaping practice in an individual situation. As each of the twelve is merely an entry point to the clockface area, the issues that arise inevitably overlap here and there, but the twelve points frame a systematic discussion.



- 

*Consider the actual or potential benefit to, or abuse of, the person in the here and now*



*Watch out for setting a precedent and keep a consistent sense of what counts as an appropriate working relationship*
- 

*Adapt your conduct to the people involved and their context*



*Apply law and regulation to all people and all relationships at all times to keep things fair*
- 

*Make the most of the person’s informal community relationships*



*Make the most of the relationship between the worker and the person*
- 

*Focus on the person and their unique resources, relationships and needs*



*Value the worker and their unique resources, relationships and needs*
- 

*Support the person’s right to run their own life, participate in the community and build a home free from surveillance or interference*



*Take action, and sometimes even over-ride the person’s preferences in order to keep everyone safe*
- 

*Keep the relationship between the worker and the person distinctive by following special rules and inhibiting other contact.*



*Use the worker’s ordinary humanity, citizenship and experience of life to engage with the person.*

<sup>1</sup> All metaphors have limited value and can carry unwanted freight. This clock has no hands, no power source, no machinery – it is simply a face with 12 observation points. The image of a 12-person jury might work just as well, although it suggests crime and punishment.

**Choose an example and describe the situation**

**Consider:** • safeguarding • a life beyond services • what policies and codes of conduct say • who might be sued • who to talk to • criminal records checks • what to write down • getting it right for this person or the system as a whole

**What will you do? Why?**

The *Boundaries Clock* has been developed by the National Development Team for Inclusion. It helps thinking on safeguarding and professional boundaries in order to prevent social exclusion and promote inclusion. It is a work in progress and continues to evolve. See also the *Boundaries Clock* diagram, question sheets and Bates P. 'Thinking about professional boundaries in an inclusive society', chapter 2 in Gilbert P (ed) (2010) *The Value of Everything* Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing. Contact [peter.bates@ndti.org.uk](mailto:peter.bates@ndti.org.uk) for training or permission to quote.