

# Boundaries & Guidelines for Swimming Instructors

1. Refrain from giving out your personal contact information. Telling clients to contact you at all hours and giving out your personal cell phone number, e-mail, or home address may lead to an unprofessional dynamic. It may also cause your client to lose trust if for some reason you do not answer your phone or you cannot help.
2. Always provide a professional work email, phone number, and office location for your clients to use to contact you.
3. Protect your privacy on social media. Your client might be tempted to “friend” you on Facebook or another form of social media. But interacting with your client in this context could breach professional boundaries.
4. Make sure your Facebook settings and other online profiles are set to private or limited to people you have approved to follow you. If your client can access information about you publicly online, this could lead to a conflict of interests.
5. Similarly, do not seek out information about your clients online that is private or irrelevant to your work with that client.
6. Establish clear physical boundaries. One of the most effective ways to establish clear professional boundaries is to let your behaviour set the standard for your meetings with your client. It is important that you do not touch your client in any inappropriate way.
7. Inappropriate forms of touching might include hugging, caressing, or holding your client’s hand. While you might think these gestures show compassion or care, it is possible they could make your client feel uncomfortable and as if he or she is in an exploitative dynamic
8. Dress appropriately. Your style of dress will also signal professional boundaries to your client.
9. Avoid wearing any form of low-cut or revealing clothing. This could make your client feel deeply uncomfortable.
10. Refrain from discussing your personal life. You might feel the urge to discuss your personal problems or difficulties in order to relate to your clients. But your clients benefit more from your professional expertise than your personal life experiences.
11. When you discuss intimate, personal details of your life with your clients, it could confuse your clients about the nature of your relationship and this could be distressing for your client.
12. Prohibit sexual relationships with your clients or former clients. Sexual or intimate relationships with your current clients are unethical and inappropriate. You cannot have sex with a former or current client and you cannot accept a client with whom you have had an intimate relationship. You may lose your job or be prosecuted for doing so. Former clients could also be harmed by a sexual relationship due to your privileged knowledge of their casework.
13. Never enter into a sexual relationship with any of your clients’ relatives or close friends either. These relationships could also potentially exploit your clients and their treatment.
14. If you find yourself developing romantic feelings toward your client, excuse yourself from the case and refer the person to another social worker.

15. Decline entering into financial relationships with your clients. You must never give your client money or accept money or gifts from your client. Do not engage in relationships where your client gives you additional money or gifts for things unrelated to social work.
16. Do not borrow money from or lend funds to current or former clients. These are actions that can easily confuse your client and put your client in an exploitative position in relation to you.
17. Cultivate friendships outside of work. One of the best ways to maintain professional boundaries is to have a clear line between your professional life and your social life.
18. Do not friend a client in any circumstances. These actions can easily confuse your client with your intentions.
19. Not visiting clients outside work hours.
20. It sets the expectation that you are available to the client outside of your normal working hours. This expectation can cause inconvenience later on, as the client may think you are "on-call" and available whenever he needs you to be.
21. May confuse your client in your kind gesture to become something more than just professional.