



# BERGEN NEW JERSEY *County*

Bergen County Executive

James J. Tedesco, III *and the*

*Bergen County Board of Commissioners, together with the*

**Department of Human Services, Human Services Institute and the Department of Health**

*Present:*

## **“Maintaining Appropriate Professional Boundaries: Exploring Ethical Obligations of Mental Health Professionals”**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 6, 2026

**Time:** 9:30AM to 3:30PM

**Location:** 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Learning Center, One Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, NJ 07601

***NJ Social Workers:** As application to the Association of Social Work Boards  
has been made for 5 Social Work Ethics CEU's.*

### **About the Course:**

Mental health professionals are charged with the legal and ethical responsibility to maintain professional boundaries, but the obligation isn't always so easy to discern. This course brings real-world context to ethical concerns often experienced by professionals in practice in maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. This course will provide a framework to contemplate ethical dilemmas and make informed decisions that insulate professionals from legal liability while protecting clients from harm. The challenges of using technology and working with families with children will be highlighted.

### **About the Instructor:**

Dr. Kathryn Krase is a social worker, lawyer, researcher, educator, and expert on professional ethics. She has significant experience as a family law practitioner, social work supervisor with more than 20 years of experience in faculty and administrative roles in undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level social work programs in and around New York City. Dr. Krase is the Principal Consultant for [Krase Consulting](#) in Brooklyn, New York, where she focuses on educating mental and physical health professionals on their general legal and ethical obligations.

### **Who Should Attend:**

This intermediate workshop is designed for Social Workers, Psychologists, Mental Health Care Providers, or professionals interested in learning the legal and ethical responsibilities in maintaining professional boundaries while protecting clients from harm.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Introduce ethical principles related to boundaries in mental health practice.
- Explore ethical challenges related to boundaries in mental health practice.
- Evaluate case dilemmas related to boundaries in mental health practice.
- Introduce and explain the four principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy and justice.
- Identify professional standards in the NASW Code of Ethics as they relate to boundaries.
- Analyze various scenarios to evaluate ethical conundrums.



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## Timed Agenda:

### Introduction (5 minutes)

### Revisiting Ethics in Professional Practice (45 minutes)

Professional education introduces future practitioners to relevant Codes of Ethics. This portion of the program will revisit what professionals should already know about ethics so that we are all on the same page as we explore further. What do we mean by “ethical?” How is “ethical” related to “legal?”

### Understanding Professional Boundaries (60 minutes)

Working closely with clients can challenge the boundaries of professionalism, but setting and maintaining boundaries is important both personally and professionally. This portion of the program will explore guidance from ethical codes on how to define appropriate boundaries with clients, highlighting the obligations of mental health professionals.

### Drawing the Lines (60 minutes)

Using case examples, this portion of the program will explore various types of relationships between professional and client that can make maintaining professional boundaries complicated.

- Physical Contact with Clients
- Conflict of Interests
- Dual Relationships
  - o Family Relationships
  - o Sexual Relationships
  - o Other Relationships
- Complicated Financial Interactions
  - o Bartering for Services
  - o Other financial Interactions

### Complicated Conditions (60 minutes)

This section of the program will explore the challenges to boundaries created by using technology in professional practice. Ethical challenges faced by professionals when working with families with children will also be explored.

### Protecting Yourself from Ethical & Legal Liability (60 minutes)

This section will outline the framework that professionals can use to prevent ethical conundrums and protect themselves from legal liability when maintaining professional boundaries is most complicated.

### Conclusions/Questions (10 minutes)

Please register by emailing [tcannon@bergencountynj.gov](mailto:tcannon@bergencountynj.gov) or calling (201) 336-7425.

**This event is free.**

***NJ Social Workers:*** This workshop is approved by the ASWB for 5 Ethical CEU's.

### To receive a certificate (for CEs):

Participants must attend entire training, sign in, sign out, *and* complete an evaluation.  
Certificates will be emailed within a week of the workshop.

***If you have any questions or concerns, or need special accommodation, please call (201) 336-7425.***