Open Doors
Chapter 11g: Relationship Repair Experience It

Amanda: Does someone, wrote in even, to ask: "Once, a boundary has been crossed, can it be uncrossed or fixed? Janet, what would you say here?

Janet: Well, this can be a tough one, indeed. Again, it's so very essential to have good supervision, good leadership, as well as, those policies in place that promote boundary setting and maintenance to refer back to, as needed, when boundaries are crossed. That close supervision, regular, honest communication throughout the agency, consistent substantiation of a culture of professionalism. An emphasis on the benefits the professional relationships can have and how that impacts the child. And then, of course, as we've mentioned, training that support realigning ethics, not just having them, but realigning them to what it is that we're working with. All of those contribute to a proactive systemic approach that will avoid many boundary violations.

However, when boundaries are crossed, it's so important to provide protection for both parties in the form of assurance that, number one, no negative personnel action will be taken unless, of course, a law has been broken, which is, you know, a whole different story -- but then setting up a safe space for both parties to be heard objectively, as well together with a supervisor. That can be offered, with the intended goal of, again, moving both back into that relationship through the act of facilitative problem solving, with a real big focus on the spirit of learning from each other. And of course, trust of the supervisor has to be in place for this to be successful.

Amanda: I love what you described, because it, really, I think, focuses us on the importance of that relationship and the understanding that those relationships can have those fissures and breaks and issues that need to be addressed, but it's still worth to maintain that relationship whenever that's a possibility for folks. I love that idea.