To date, there is scant literature addressing the topic of professional boundaries with teenagers in residential treatment programs. Because the gap in the literature has left many questions unanswered, a qualitative case study was conducted in order to gain a more thorough understanding of professional boundaries as they relate to adolescent females placed in residential treatment for emotional and behavioral difficulties.

The young women articulately expressed their desire to have a physical (nonsexual) and emotional relationship with both their peers and staff members. In addition, the young women asserted that they wanted staff to set limits so that boundary violations could and would not occur. However, within the daily living environment teens expressed a desire to have the confines of boundary crossing situations to be more relaxed. Based on the findings, implications for practice are suggested.

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Boundary Realities from the Wisdom of Female Youth in Residential Treatment

Journal of Child and Youth Care Work