

# Expanding Professional Boundaries to Create Boundaries that Connect Rather than Separate

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## **Abstract**

Being an Arab lecturer in a Jewish academic institution under fire has challenged me as a professional, a researcher, and a lecturer. Social workers often function in the context of conflicts, but the practice focuses on normative social problems such as domestic violence, poverty, and crime rather than the effects of the conflict on social workers and their clients. In my academic institution, which for years has been in a conflict area and under fire, students are not equipped with relevant knowledge and skills.

Being a lecturer under fire together with students creates a shared experience of fear, worry, and trauma which requires renewed consideration of the boundaries between lecturer and student. O'Leary et al. (2013) propose a model of connection rather than separation. It puts the service user in the center of the array of boundaries, thus promoting connection and the use of self rather than professional distancing and separation. In light of this model, lecturers must create boundaries that connect them to their students. Such a connection will enable closeness, thus creating an encompassing and receptive atmosphere rather than an experience of distance and alienation.

In my lecturer I will analyzes my personal narrative documented during three of Israel's wars with the Gaza Strip

**Keywords:** Boundaries, Jewish academic institution, personal knowledge, Social work in conflict areas