

Abstract

This thesis is based on analytical methods stemming from established theory and uses them to examine *the issue of boundaries in helping professions*. The purpose of the thesis is to understand the specific aspects of a relationship between a physically disabled client and their assistant, as well as the subjective perception of *the boundary* in a helping relationship. The research data had been collected through seven interviews with personal assistants. An analysis of this data has brought results in the form of a description of a personal assistant's profession and a summary of factors that play a significant role in establishing the relationship. Out of all the discovered topics, the relationship plays the most fundamental role and it has shown to consist of several levels – professional, friendly, parental or sibling and sexual. Boundaries become established within these levels in various forms and degrees depending on personal, relationship or situational factors. This issue represents a complex and multilayered topic with a vast array of paradoxes and dilemmas. The respondents do not perceive boundaries as something static, unchanging or even absolutely necessary. Just like the relationship itself, the boundaries within – if present – undergo a process of development during which they transformed or torn down.

Keywords: ethnography, helping professions, personal assistant, client, the relationship of the client – helping worker, boundary, supervision