Managing Boundaries and Multiple Relationships

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 Psychology and important branch of science; it deals with the study of the human mind, behavior and natures. Psychologists perform the duty of observing and studying the personality of their clients and providing them valuable feedback based on their personality type. They also provide the solutions and therapies to their clients after hearing their issues thoroughly. However, the professionals working in the area of psychological therapy are strictly prohibited to keep any kind of personal relationship with the clients. The relationship between a professional psychologist and a client should be extremely professional and dual relationships are strictly prohibited.

However, the relations between a psychological therapist or a counselor and a client has always been confusing and tricky. The National Board of the Certified Counselors clearly lays out the boundaries for the type of relationships between the client and the counselor. Clause 2 of “Section B: Counseling Relationship” of NCBB in the following words:

“Certified counselors know and take into account the traditions and practices of other professional disciplines with whom they work and cooperate fully with such. If a person is receiving similar services from another professional, certified counselors do not offer their own services directly to such a person. If a certified counselor is contacted by a person who is already receiving similar services from another professional, the certified counselor carefully considers that professional relationship as well as the client’s welfare and proceeds with caution and sensitivity to the therapeutic issues. When certified counselors learn that their clients are in a professional relationship with another counselor or mental health professional, they request release from the clients to inform the other counselor or mental health professional of their relationship with the client and strive to establish positive and collaborative professional relationships that are in the best interest of the client. Certified counselors discuss these issues with clients and the counselor or professional so as to minimize the risk of confusion and conflict and encourage clients to inform other professionals of the new professional relationship.” (Author, 2006)

 In the same manner, clause 9 of the same Ethical Code define the relationship between a professional therapist and a client in the below-mentioned words:

“Certified counselors who have an administrative, supervisory and/or evaluative relationship with individuals seeking counseling services must not serve as the counselor and should refer the individuals to other professionals. Exceptions are made only in instances where an individual’s situation warrants counseling intervention and another alternative is unavailable. Dual relationships that might impair the certified counselor’s objectivity and professional judgment must be avoided and/or the counseling relationship terminated through referral to a competent professional” (Author, 2006)

Ideally, the therapist-client relationship needs to be kept as clinical as is humanly possible. No relationship should exist outside the counseling space (Association, 2014). It is quite possible that the therapist and the client meet outside of the therapeutic setting but it is not advisable that the therapist personally reaches the client. However, if the client reaches the therapist or counselor themselves, the therapist can choose to meet them.

Under normal circumstances, it would be appropriate for them to attend different meetings or join different groups. The only problem is if they live in a small town in an isolated area. In those situations, often it is impossible to not interact outside the office. If this is the case, they should set guidelines and ground rules about how they will interact in public situations. If running the meeting they are still in a professional setting. But if a member then it is advisable to find another meet as that would be boundary-crossing and boundaries are extremely important in a therapeutic setting.

**References**

Association, A. C. (2014). *ACA Code of Ethics.* Alexandria: American Counseling Association.

Author. (2006). Code of Ethics. *Code of Ethics* , p. 3.