

# Online assignment 5



1. Dual relationships occur in helping professions like those of a counselor. Dual relationship suggests that apart from the relationship as a counselor and client, or as a supervisor and trainee, another relationship between the two individuals develops, which could be sexual involvement, romantic or even non-sexual involvement such as friendship or business relationship. Dual relationships grow due to frequent interactions between the two and cannot emerge suddenly. In nutshell, the helping profession has to play dual roles to help the incumbent who has come to him for help. This implies that apart from a professional relationship, a personal relationship develops.

2a. The issue of ethics arises in dual relationship but at times the dual relationship may occur out of sheer coincidence. This is circumstantial multiple role played by the professional and this arises out of misinterpretation. In small rural communities the psychologists often have a holistic view of the clients and this often leads to overlapping of social and business relationship that affects the psychologists' family (Friedman, 2000).

Dual relationship can occur when they are integral to the profession. An individual has to play structured multiple professional roles and is prevalent in counselor education and supervision. The supervisor can hold multiple roles as a mentor or advisor. This implies that the nature of both the roles is professional. In such a situation there is no conflict of interest and the relationship is seen upon as complimentary. However, when dual relationships become necessary, the professional must be conscious of the possible harm it could cause. One role can create conflict in this relationship. In their role as evaluators or in providing therapy service to the students, problems could arise due to shift in professional relationships. This could

happen when the supervisor counseling a student develops a personal relationship that could be sexual or romantic in nature. In such a situation there are chances that the professional could exploit the student or the client. A professor (female) during the course of discussion with a female student stated that she missed having a man in her life as she had been widowed some years ago (Gottlieb, 1993). The student called up the professor a week later and offered to introduce her to a man who could be interesting. The professor instantly agreed but upon consultation with another colleague the next day, declined to meet the man.

2b. Circumstantial multiple role, present mostly in small communities, can be openly discussed right at the beginning to avoid the relationship taking deeper meaning. However, it may not be possible to altogether avoid the dual relationship for the benefit of the profession and the client. The psychologists should not abuse the power and should avoid seeing the client when it is not absolute necessary. The psychologists need to be conscious of the ethical dilemmas and the potential harm such relationships can cause if not kept under control.

In the case of supervisor/mentor and student relationship, as the chances of exploitation are high, the ethical models should be adhered to. Power differences are high and hence the supervisor felt that in accepting the offer from the student she would be taking undue advantage but such a relationship causes no harm to anyone. It was a pure friendship offer and the professor could have met the man. Hence situations have to be evaluated on case-to-case basis as ethical models may not always be practical.

Reference:

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