

Dual relationships

Sociology



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Engaging in dual relationships leads to loss of objectivity of the counseling problems and clients may encounter problems when counselors evade their professional responsibility. Clients having their employers as counselors experience problems outside the counseling relationship. Employees may expect empathy in the work ratings since they perceive their supervisors as sympathetic listeners and counselors. Counselors can also have problems in keeping client information confidential and respecting the privacy of clients, which may lead to exposure of personal problems in the workplace.

Counselors are supposed to evaluate the consequences of dual relationships before crossing the client-counselor boundary (Remley and Herlihy, 2010).

The counselor has to assess the expected benefits to the client before entering into a dual relationship. Some clients have borderline personality disorders and manipulate their counselors into relationships that may harm the therapeutic intervention. Patients with mental problems may misinterpret the intentions behind the relationship caused by impairments in understanding the boundaries. This can lead to ineffective therapy or legal issues that can affect the career of the counselor. The counselor can minimize harm and risks by evaluating the long term outcomes of the relationships. Emerging risks can be avoided by redefining the boundaries since the client-counselor boundaries are not static. This can help prevent jeopardy to the therapeutic gain caused by friendship.

Reference

Remley, T. P., and Herlihy, B. (2010). Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling, (3rd Ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.