

sustained in-service training on these issues. In addition to traditional presentations, the training should include opportunities for members to wrestle with complex case scenarios. In-service training can help staff members apply various guidelines—code of ethics, agency policies, pertinent statutes, regulations, and case law—to material to help sharpen the staff's ethical judgment.

Finally, human service administrators and supervisors should develop and continually refine agency-based policies designed to provide staff with effective guidance regarding boundary issues. Although formulating clear, unequivocal guidelines that address all boundary-related perceptions is impossible, thoughtful, conceptually rigorous guidelines can indicate to staff members the core values and concepts they need to understand and help them enhance their critical thinking skills. Smith and Smith's astute conclusion about the ambiguity of many boundary situations in clinical contexts has broad implications for the human services in-

general. Boundary issues regularly pose complex challenges to clinicians. The effects of crossing commonly recognized boundaries range from significant therapeutic progress to serious, indelible harm. The issues are often complicated by the wide range of individual variation that exists in where what is normal practice for one clinician may be considered a clear violation by another. Although setting appropriate boundaries is a professional imperative, flexibility in their maintenance is equally important. Clinicians should avoid setting simplistic standards that may create barriers to therapeutic progress. In the final analysis, ethical practice is governed less by proscriptions than by sound clinical judgment bearing on therapeutic interventions that will advance the client's welfare. Given individual differences among clients, fine adjustments are required in each case.

(1995:505)

end human service professionals who face difficult and challenging issues must draw on their finely honed ethical instincts. Conceptualization is fine and important, but practitioners' handling of daunting issues ultimately must depend on their genuine and passionate dedication to make ethically sound judgments.

Appendix

EXCERPTS FROM CODES OF ETHICS: BOUNDARIES, DUAL RELATIONSHIPS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, *CODE OF ETHICS* (2001)

1.3 Marriage and family therapists are aware of their influential positions with respect to clients, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid conditions and multiple relationships with clients that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with a client or the client's immediate family. When the risk of impairment or exploitation exists due to conditions or multiple roles, therapists take appropriate precautions.

1.4 Sexual intimacy with clients is prohibited.

1.5 Sexual intimacy with former clients is likely to be harmful and is therefore prohibited for two years following the termination of therapy or last professional contact. In an effort to avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of clients, marriage and family therapists should not engage in sexual intimacy with former clients after the two years following termination or last professional contact. Should therapists engage in sexual intimacy with former clients following two years after termination or last professional contact, the burden shifts to the therapist to demonstrate that there has been no exploitation or injury to the former client or to the client's immediate family.

1.7 Marriage and family therapists do not use their professional relationships with clients to further their own interests.

3.4 Marriage and family therapists do not provide services that create a conflict of interest that may impair work performance or clinical judgment.

4.5 Marriage and family therapists, as presenters, teachers, supervisors,