

1

BOUNDARY ISSUES AND DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Key Concepts

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING case scenarios and imagine yourself as the human service professional. How would you handle the boundary issues in these circumstances?

■ **Tanya M.**, a counselor employed in a community mental health center, provides services to clients with chronic mental illness. One of her clients, who is being treated for bipolar disorder, has been abusing alcohol and cocaine. Tanya encouraged the client to begin attending twelve-step meetings. The client decides to attend a local meeting that she chose from a list of area meetings. At the meeting the client encountered Tanya, who has been in recovery for nearly nine years. Tanya was surprised to see her client at the meeting and had to decide whether to stay in the meeting and whether to speak at the meeting in front of her client.

■ **Belinda K.** was a case manager at a family service agency. She developed a good working relationship with a client, Theresa B., who was referred to the agency after she was released from prison on parole. Theresa deeply appreciated the help she received from Belinda and decided to give Belinda a gift—a bracelet worth about twenty dollars. Belinda had to decide whether to keep the gift. One concern she had was that Theresa would be offended if Belinda returned the gift. However, Belinda's agency had a policy that prohibited staff from accepting gifts from clients.

■ **Stephen M.** was a counselor in private practice. One of his clients, Daphne F., a religious woman, asked Stephen to please spend time with her reading passages from the Bible. Stephen was not particularly religious but thought it might be therapeutically helpful to Daphne to read the Bible with her. Stephen wasn't sure whether it would be appropriate for him to read the Bible with Daphne.