

■ Phoebe W. was a social worker at an outpatient counseling program for adolescents. One of Phoebe's clients, Anna, sixteen, struggled with issues of depression and marijuana abuse. Over time Phoebe and Anna developed a strong therapeutic alliance. During one clinical session Anna asked Phoebe whether she had smoked marijuana as a teenager and whether Phoebe had ever gotten high. Phoebe was unsure whether to respond candidly about her own drug use as a teenager. In addition, Anna asked Phoebe to "friend" her on Facebook.

■ Phil C. was a counselor in a group private practice. Phil provided counseling services to a young man, Dwayne L., who was struggling with anxiety. Dwayne worked hard in treatment and terminated after about seven months. Phil and Dwayne had an excellent therapeutic relationship. Nearly seven years later Phil and Dwayne encountered each other, entirely by coincidence, at a mutual acquaintance's holiday party. Phil and Dwayne thoroughly enjoyed reconnecting. Phil and Dwayne enjoyed each other's company so much that they talked about getting together again socially. A couple of colleagues in Phil's peer consultation group expressed concern about his entering into a relationship with a former client.

In recent years human service professionals have developed an increasingly mature grasp of ethical issues in general and, more specifically, boundary issues (Reamer 2006c). The professional literature has expanded markedly with respect to identifying ethical conflicts and dilemmas in practice; developing conceptual frameworks and protocols for ethical decision making when professional duties conflict; and formulating risk-management strategies to avoid ethics-related negligence and ethical misconduct (Barnett and Johnson 2008; Barsky 2009; Bernstein and Hartsell 2008; Bersoff 2008; Congress 1999; Corey, Corey, and Callanan 2010; Gray and Webb 2010; Koocher and Keith-Spiegler 2008; Loewenberg, Dolgoff, and Harrington 2008; Nagy 2010; Pope and Vasquez 2010; Reamer 2003a, 2006a–b, 2009a; Wilcoxon, Remley, and Gladding 2011).

Clearly, ethical issues related to professional boundaries are among the most problematic and challenging. Briefly, boundary issues arise when human service professionals encounter actual or potential conflicts between their professional duties and their social, sexual, religious, collegial, or business relationships (DeJulio and Berkman 2003; Gutheil and Gabbard 1993; Reamer 2008a–b, 2009a–c; St. Germaine 1993, 1996; Syme 2003; Zur 2007). As I will explore more fully later, not all boundary issues are problematic or