



ATEP

Association of Transpersonal and Experiential Psychotherapists Inc.

Ethical approach to dual relationships guidelines

Preamble

Dual relationships exist in many circumstances of life. Understanding these and working with them is an important part of professional practice.

Dual relationship situations arise when a counsellor has two or more kinds of relationship concurrently with a person. ATEP members accept that a dual relationship is unlikely to always be neutral and can have effects that are not always easily foreseeable (leading to harm, as well as benefit). Some examples of dual relationships are:

1. Counsellor and family member
2. Counsellor and friend
3. Counsellor and friend of immediate family member
4. Counsellor and colleague
5. Counsellor and clinical supervisor
6. Trainer and family member
7. Trainer and friend
8. Trainer and counsellor
9. Trainer and counsellor of immediate family member

Complications arising from Dual Relationships increase exponentially when a 'network' of multiple relationships are entered into. Dual relationships and associated dilemmas are most likely to emerge for practitioners who work as clinicians, supervisors, educators and consultants in small community settings. These include rural, ethnic, ATEP, training, gay and lesbian and other minority communities.

Guidelines

1. ATEP members must consider the implications of entering into dual relationships and refrain from engaging in dual relationships that may:
 - impair their competency, effectiveness, or ability to deliver professional services;
 - harm clients, supervisees, trainees or other recipients of professional services;
 - lead to the exploitation of clients, supervisees, trainees or other recipients of professional services.

2. ATEP members are accountable to clients, trainees, supervisees and colleagues for any dual relationships that occur, and they are required to engage in open and transparent communication around dual relationship issues.
3. ATEP members declare to clients, supervisees, trainees or other recipients of professional services any vested interests in the provision of services that may lead to a conflict of interest. This is to be declared at the outset of the professional relationship or as an apparent conflict emerges.
4. It is recommended that ATEP Members give deep consideration before entering into any Dual Relationships. At times, it may be unavoidable due to over-riding ethical considerations, organisational requirements, or by law.
5. ATEP Members will adhere to the provisions of informed consent at the outset of the professional relationship and thereafter when it is necessary, particularly if a conflict of interest arises in the future. That is, they fully inform clients, supervisees, trainees and other recipients of professional services of the issues and implications of the dual relationship.
6. Dual Relationships, when they occur, require transparency and support to ethically address any issues that arise so as to gain personal insight, and to gain personal experience with the dynamics of projection, bonding patterns, reaction work, intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics, transference and counter transference issues, boundaries, and ethics.
7. ATEP members who are at risk of violating ethical standards must consult with an experienced supervisor or practitioner and attempt to find an appropriate resolution that is in the best interests of clients, supervisees, trainees, other recipients of professional service and the counselling profession itself.

Due consideration must be given to an appropriate amount of time lapsing between termination of one professional relationship before commencement of another role, appropriate to the nature of the prior relationship.