

Scenario 1
The Case of Joan

You supervise Joan who has been a therapist at your agency for the past three years. Three months ago she began dating a man – Mark – whom she had met through mutual friends. This past weekend Mark mentioned in passing that he was in counseling with his ex-wife at the agency before they decided to divorce. This morning Joan enters your office to discuss this situation in light of the agency policy that prohibits social and intimate relationships between staff and clients (and former clients). Joan was not involved in a primary counseling relationship with Mark nor was she employed by the agency when Mark was a client. She was completely unaware of Mark’s status of “former client” until this past weekend.

Questions to ponder:

What ethical or professional practice issues do you see, if any, in this situation?

Should the ban on social/intimate relationships apply to this situation?

What is your response to Joan?

Does the “once a client-always a client” policy apply here or would you make an exception?

If you make an exception, what is the rationale for doing so?

What would you do as a supervisor if such a situation were brought to you?

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