



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4757-5-04 Standards of ethical practice and professional conduct: sexual relationships.

Effective: December 26, 2023

(A) Licensees and registrants of the counselor, social worker, and marriage and family therapist board shall not engage in sexual relations with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced. A client of the agency is considered a client of each licensee or registrant employed or contracted at the agency for purposes of ethics under the sexual relationships section of this chapter. The duty of the licensee is based on that particular licensee's knowledge of a client's identity prior to starting a relationship.

(B) Licensees and registrants shall not have sexual relations with clients and shall not counsel persons with whom they have had a sexual relationship.

(C) Licensees and registrants shall not engage in sexual relations with former clients within a minimum of five years after terminating the therapeutic relationship. Licensees and registrants who choose to engage in such a relationship after a minimum of five years following termination have the responsibility to thoroughly examine and document in the client's record that such a relationship does not have an exploitative nature, based upon factors such as duration of therapy, amount of time since therapy, termination circumstances, client's personal history and mental status, adverse impact on the client, power differentials, and actions by the professional suggesting a plan with the client after termination.

(D) A client of the agency is considered a client of each licensee or registrant employed or contracted by the agency for purposes of ethics under the sexual harassment, multiple relationships and sexual relationships sections of this rule. Licensees and registrants shall not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the counselor, social worker or marriage and family therapist to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Licensees and registrants, not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals



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with whom the client maintains a personal relationship assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. The duty of the licensee is based on that particular licensee's knowledge of a client's identity prior to starting a relationship.