Categories of DUAL or MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS Between Psychotherapists & Clients

**TYPE**
- **SOCIAL/COMMUNAL**
  - Engaging with clients in local schools, church/synagogue, recreation leagues, markets, etc.
- **PROFESSIONAL**
  - Patient is also a colleague, treating doctor, investment advisor, etc.
  - Therapist is also patient’s acupuncturist
  - Therapist also treats friends of clients
- **BUSINESS**
  - Client is also a business partner
  - Buying a car from client
  - Bartering for services with clients
- **INSTITUTIONAL**
  - Universities, colleges
  - Prisons, jails
  - Military
  - Law enforcement, police
  - Post-grad training inst.
  - Spiritual communities
- **FORENSIC**
  - Therapist as treater & evaluator or as treater & expert
- **SEXUAL**
  - Sex between therapist & client
- **DIGITAL**
  - Client is also a friend on FB
- **OTHERS**
  - Adoption of former client

**CHOICE/OPTIONAL**
- **MANDATED**
  - Military
  - Prisons/jails
- **AVOIDABLE/OPTIONAL**
  - Big cities
  - Large communities with many therapists to choose from

**LEGAL/Ethical**
- **ETHICAL**
  - Mandated & unavoidable
  - Not exploitative
  - Not harmful
  - Not reasonably expected to be exploitative
- **UNETHICAL**
  - Exploitative
  - Harmful
  - Sexual with current clients
  - Sexual with recently terminated clients

**TIMING/Sequence**
- **CONCURRENT**
  - Therapy takes place at the same time as other relationships (friends, colleagues, etc.)
- **SEQUENTIAL**
  - Therapy takes place before or after the other relationships, i.e.: friendship after termination

**INTENSITY of CONTACT**
- **LOW**
  - Sporadic–intermittent social contact
- **MEDIUM**
  - Regular or weekly social or institutional contact
- **HIGH**
  - Intense social relationships or complex business relationships

**COMMON**
- **TYPICAL/COMMON**
  - Rural & small communities
  - Drug rehab & AA
  - Universities, colleges
  - Post-grad training inst.
  - Faith community
  - Military
  - Prisons/jails
  - Sport psychology
- **ATYPICAL/UNCOMMON**
  - Large communities with numerous therapists to choose from

All major Codes of Ethics acknowledge that:

- Not all dual relationships are unethical
- “Multiple relationships that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or risk exploitation or harm are not unethical.” (APA)

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