

Ethical Issues in Mentoring Doctoral Students in Clinical Psychology

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Ethical issues abound in any relationship that is defined by differences between the parties in rank, status, and power. Such is the case in the relationship between a doctoral student in clinical psychology and his or her mentor. In this article, we examine several potential areas of ethical concern within the mentor-student relationship. We present a series of vignettes and our analyses of the issues that arise within them as we examine romantic dual relationships, nonromantic dual relationships, and other ways in which the mentor's power may be intentionally or unintentionally misused for personal gain. We also look at several examples of unhelpful mentoring. Problematic situations often arise when there is the potential for loss of objectivity by either party or exploitation of the student by the mentor. Although the relationship with one's mentor may be one of the most important and gratifying aspects of the graduate school experience, both mentors and students should keep in mind that behavioral choices within this relationship are often complex ones that require forethought, self-monitoring, and discussion between the parties.

THOSE of us who have gone to graduate school in clinical psychology are privy to the unique facets of the mentoring relationship. The mentor is part boss, part teacher, part parent, with the proportions differing from mentor to mentor, student to student, and across time within a specific mentor-student relationship. Arguably, the mentor is the single most important determinant of the student's graduate school experience (and oftentimes postgraduate experience, as well).

Some of the issues addressed by this paper are generally applicable to students and mentors across a range of mental health fields, whereas other issues are particular to the scientist-practitioner model within doctoral clinical psychology training. In most cases, the position of mentor to a student in the mental health field brings with it huge rewards but also huge responsibilities, partially resulting from the large power differential inherent in the relationship. In fact, the mentor has virtually all the power in the mentor-student relationship. Some mentors may regard mentorship solely through the lens of their own self-interest, exerting their dominance in the relationship to further their careers, without necessarily giving proper thought to the development of the student. In this case, students may be uncertain when to adapt to the mentor's behavior and when that behavior should be deemed unacceptable. Even the most kind-

hearted and well-intentioned mentor may not recognize the extent to which some students, very aware of the mentor's virtual omnipotence, may fear displeasing him or her. It is important for mentors young and old to always keep the power differential in mind and be aware that it may exert its influence in many and diverse ways.

The mentorship relationship is inherently and practically hierarchical. Within a doctoral program, the mentor may provide the largest single source of evaluation of the student's progress. The mentor determines when the student's thesis, dissertation, or other degree projects are completed and ready for defense. The mentor writes letters of recommendation for the student, which may be the most significant component in applications for practica, internships, and jobs. The mentor may also be a gatekeeper of sorts, in that the student must work with a particular mentor to gain access to clinical or other research populations that are of specific interest to the student. In most doctoral programs, students may have few choices of alternative mentors in their areas of interest, and the prospect of transferring to another program is daunting, sometimes unrealistic, and other times constrained by the demands of one's personal life (e.g., the student's significant other is a student in another program in the same city). Whereas in other fields, individuals may move from job to job with relative ease, thereby enjoying the opportunity to exercise greater freedom, within a graduate program, especially one using a mentorship model, such lateral moves are difficult, if not impossible. Thus, students may often believe that they must adjust to their mentor's behavior or face an uncertain future. Whether this perception is accurate or

largely distorted, it underscores the disparity of power inherent in the mentor-student relationship. According to Johnson and Nelson (1999, as quoted in Kolbert, Morgan, & Brendel, 2002), "Given that mentoring relationships involve a large power imbalance, are long-term in nature, rarely have a clear ending point, and include intimacy and mutuality, they 'appear unique in their potential for both significant benefit and potential harm'" (pp. 195-196).

Below, we discuss examples in which the power differential may create situations that are clearly or potentially unethical. Many of these examples are actual situations of which we have become aware throughout the years. In these cases, the names of the involved parties and specific details have been changed. We have grouped these various situations into several categories: romantic dual relationships, nonromantic dual relationships, use and misuse of power, and unhelpful mentoring. However, all involve teaching by the mentor and learning by the student, much of it not what we want our students to learn.

Romantic dual relationships are a common problem and not unique to our field. We offer a couple of vignettes to illustrate clearly and ambiguously inappropriate interactions between mentors and students and the consequences that may ensue. We discuss differences in student and faculty perceptions of "appropriate" romantic relationships and question whether a consensual relationship is possible in the hierarchical structure of a mentor-student relationship. Next we address nonromantic dual relationships through vignettes illustrating employer-employee relationships and friendships between mentors and students. Considering that faculty often have complex and multifaceted roles, we identify aspects of dual relationships that are more or less likely to lead to exploitative behavior. Thereafter, we address other situations in which power may be misused, knowingly or unknowingly. This section includes giving appropriate publication credit and use of degree projects to further faculty interest over student interest. The last section, unhelpful mentoring, addresses situations in which the mentor is either unavailable or unwilling to advise.

We offer a series of vignettes and analysis of each. We refer to the *American Psychological Association's (2002) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* ("Ethics Code") and available scholarly literature regarding faculty-student relationships to guide our analysis of the vignettes and our conclusions. This paper is not meant to instruct the reader in what is and is not appropriate—the Ethics Code does a much better job of that. Rather, we hope to stimulate discussion, warn of pitfalls, and, most of all, help to disambiguate potentially ethically ambiguous situations.

Dual Relationships (Apa Ethics Code 3.05: Multiple Relationships)

The preamble of the Ethics Code recognizes that psychologists "perform many roles, such as researcher, educator, diagnostician, therapist, supervisor, consultant, administrator, social interventionist, and expert witness" in an effort to "strive to help the public in developing informed judgments and choices concerning human behavior" (p. 3). The Ethics Code goes on to specify (Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence) that in each of these roles "psychologists strive to benefit those with whom they work and take care to do no harm," to "safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally and other affected persons" and to be "alert to and guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence" (p. 3).

Two decades ago, Kitchener (1988) offered a framework based on social role theory for identifying dual relationships—between counseling professionals and students—at risk of being unethical and problematic. Acknowledging that dual relationships were frequently part of faculty and mental health professionals' responsibilities, she suggested three guidelines to identify those dual role relationships that are most likely to be harmful. First, incompatibility of expectations between roles increases the likelihood of negative outcomes. For example, the expectations are quite different in a supervisor-supervisee relationship than a therapist-client relationship. Evaluation is inherent to one relationship and virtually absent from the other. Confidentiality is primary to the therapist-client relationship but is not guaranteed in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Thus, supervising and treating the same individual would result in incompatible expectations. On the other hand, teaching and supervising have more similar expectations: education and evaluation. Teaching and supervising the same individual is less likely to result in a problematic dual relationship. When various roles conflict with each other, individuals may have trouble determining which behaviors are appropriate.

Second, as Kitchener notes, the greater the divide between role expectations, the more difficult it becomes for the professional to maintain objectivity and to put the welfare of the other person first. Since the student, in this case, is the individual with whom the psychologist is working, according to the APA Ethics Code, it is incumbent upon the psychologist to safeguard the welfare and rights of this student. Kitchener points out that if the professional engages in a relationship with a student in which the expectation is for reciprocal service and care, such as a romantic relationship or a friendship, it will become particularly difficult to maintain objectivity and to

put the welfare of the student first. It is important to remember that the primary reason for the mentoring relationship is to foster the academic and professional development of the student and to ensure the student's welfare. It can be quite a challenge for any mentor to maintain focus on the student's welfare as the first priority, and this focus may be virtually impossible when a personal relationship obscures objectivity.

Finally, Kitchener argues that, as the difference in power and prestige between the mentor and student increases, the ability of the student to stay objective regarding her own self-interest decreases and the potential for exploitation increases. According to Kitchener, the student is likely to expect knowledge and wisdom from psychologists, scientists, professors, etc., and these expectations are likely to be greater for faculty with greater power and prestige. So, loss of objectivity and the ability to make decisions in one's own interest may occur for the student as well as the mentor, especially when working with someone high in power and prestige. Dual role relationships include romantic relationships, friendships, employer-employee relationships, and others.

Romantic Dual Relationships

Vignette: An Unfortunate Affair

In one instance, a student and a professor more than 20 years her elder had a romantic involvement that thoroughly disrupted the laboratory and, in fact, the entire department. In this case, both the student, Raina, and Professor Walters were married to other partners when the affair began. Dr. Walters was a highly esteemed full professor with a large laboratory and several students, many of whom were friendly with Raina's husband and suspected that there were problems in that relationship. When Dr. Walters and Raina shared a hotel room at a conference regularly attended by members of the laboratory and the department, other faculty took notice. They questioned students from Dr. Walters's laboratory as to whether they knew of any "inappropriate" behavior, and the students found themselves in the uneasy position of lying or fearing that they would harm themselves by being forthcoming. One senior student in particular was approached and, although she refrained from mentioning anything for fear of reprimand, she was targeted and punished by Dr. Walters. Although once she had been a student who could do no wrong in the eyes of her mentor, now that Dr. Walters suspected her of playing a role in bringing the affair to light, he criticized her clinical work, writing, and research ideas with venom not previously seen. In a move of self-preservation, this student successfully transferred to another professor's lab. Following her lead, many other students did the same. A number of students had to switch areas of study in doing so, and some even had to take on new thesis topics, resulting in

delays to graduation, as well as loss of the opportunity to study and position themselves for jobs in their specific area of interest.

Raina dropped out of the program in her fourth year. Many assumed this was to protect Dr. Walters, who at that point was being investigated by the department. If it was made to look like the affair occurred after she was no longer a student, they may have reasoned, no breach of ethics would be found.

Analysis. A survey from 1988 found that more than 25% of male faculty reported dating female students, and a slightly larger percentage reported engaging in sexual encounters or relationships with students (Fitzgerald, Weitzman, Gold, & Ormerod, 1988). A survey asking female APA members about their experiences in graduate school found that 17% of respondents had engaged in sexual contact with educators during their graduate training (Glaser & Thorpe, 1986). Although, unfortunately, we could not locate more current surveys, our impression is that romantic dual relationships continue to be a problem today.

Using Kitchener's framework, it is clear that the roles of a mentor and romantic partner have very disparate expectations. Likely as a mentor, Dr. Walters would have attempted to dissuade a successful advanced student from dropping out. On the other hand, because of their romantic relationship and its discovery, Dr. Walters had largely different motivations, which were abetted by Raina's leaving the program. Dr. Walters's status as an influential researcher in the field and his significantly more advanced age may have also diminished objectivity on Raina's part. In many ways, she may have interpreted Dr. Walters's encouragement of their relationship as evidence that it was benign because she viewed Dr. Walters as a wise, responsible, knowledgeable person who would ensure she would not be harmed. In this case, a loss of objectivity was likely by both players in the dual relationship.

Some have queried whether a student, who is in a less powerful position, can feel that there are no consequences of rejecting a professor's requests, bringing into question the very possibility that a romantic relationship between a professor and a student may be consensual (see Blevins-Knabe, 1992). Several studies in counseling and educational psychology have examined student and faculty perceptions of dual relationships and found that students and faculty differ in their perceptions of the appropriateness of certain dual relationships (e.g., Bowman, Hatley, & Bowman, 1995; Kolbert et al., 2002). Specifically, Kolbert et al. conducted a qualitative study involving the administration of several vignettes, and questions regarding the vignettes, to students and faculty in a counseling education master's program. Faculty were more likely than students to perceive that counselor

educators would maintain objectivity and not exploit students while engaging in dual-role relationships. Glaser and Thorpe (1986) found that female psychologists considered their involvement in sexual relationships/encounters with faculty members in graduate school as less consensual at the time of rating, on average 15 years after the beginning of their graduate studies, than at the time of the relationship. This was the case whether the romantic relationship occurred during the time of the working relationship or outside of it. Whereas 72% reported feeling that their involvement was “not at all coerced” at the time of the involvement, only 49% continued to maintain this view when they made their ratings. Also, whereas only 2.5% reported they felt “very coerced” at the time of involvement, 13.9% reported feeling that they had been very coerced at the time of rating. When respondents were compared based on the number of years since they received their doctorate (2–6 years, 7–11 years, 12–20 years, and over 20 years), the authors found a difference between the two most recently graduated groups and the least recently graduated group, with a higher incidence of contact (i.e., sexual intercourse or direct genital stimulation) among the more recent graduates.

Most psychologists will say that a romantic involvement between a student and her professor is unethical. For most of us, the very notion invokes phrases like “dual relationship” and “power dynamic.” But how often do we think about the effects of such an involvement on other students, the functioning of a lab, clinic, or program, or the reputation of a department? The above situation illustrates the broad impact of this unethical practice above and beyond its direct effects on the principals. A romantic dual relationship discredits the guarantees of professionalism and equal treatment expected by the larger learning community. Take a moment to consider how romantic relationships between mentor and student, professor and a student within a class he or she teaches, or a noninstructing faculty member and student may impact the greater community. Imagine these scenarios for individuals of various ages, genders, and ethnic backgrounds. Do demographic characteristics of the players make a difference in determining the impact on the larger community?

Vignette: The Former Dual Relationship?

The professor in this case, Dr. Sands, was a young faculty member who was unmarried. The student, Diane, who worked in Dr. Sands's lab as a graduate student, was single as well. Once Diane finished her predoctoral internship and earned her degree, she took a job at a treatment center located nearby, but unaffiliated with, the graduate program. She still visited her former mentor on occasion. After about a year or so, Diane and Dr. Sands

started dating. Diane informed the students whom she supervised at the center who were in her old program and the older students in the lab. In about another year, they became engaged and were eventually married.

Analysis. It is unclear whether Dr. Sands and Diane had feelings for each other when they were in the roles of student and mentor, but their behavior remained professional until they were no longer in that role relationship. Some may consider a romantic relationship which commences once student and advisor are no longer in the active mentoring relationship as ethical, whereas others might think that the residual power differential would interfere with the development of an ethical romantic relationship over the longer term. It is simply difficult to determine when or if the power disparities of a previous relationship have dissipated and whether the potential for exploitation remains. One qualitative study (Kolbert et al., 2002) asked counselor education faculty and master's students to consider the appropriateness of a similar vignette. In this case, the faculty member was recently divorced and had taught the student in several classes. Near the end of her counseling program, the faculty member supervised the student in a practicum and realized he was romantically interested in her. The student also gave signs of being attracted to the professor, and once the practicum ended, the professor and student began a romantic relationship. The study found that student and faculty respondents were divided with regard to the appropriateness of the relationship, with some students believing the relationship was inappropriate under any circumstances due to a “residual inequitable power differential” (p. 202). Other students considered the relationship acceptable because the student was no longer a supervisee or student of the professor. Of the professors examining the vignette, some believed a 2-year minimum waiting period, similar to the American Counseling Association and APA standard of a 2-year waiting period before having sexual relations with former clients, should be observed before engaging in such a relationship, whereas others did not believe such a waiting period was necessary. Of the six faculty members participating in the study (four male, two female), none believed that a relationship between a faculty member and former student and supervisee was unethical under all circumstances. Any conclusions from the study should be tempered, however, by the small number of faculty members (six) and only slightly larger number of students (16) included in the study. Additionally, the students were in a master's program, and the student in the scenario was a former student (in a class) and supervisee of the faculty member, forming a likely less involved relationship than the mentor-mentee (advisor-advisee) relationship.

The vignette above also leaves it unclear as to whether the faculty member might still have an evaluative role with

regards to the student, such as through participation of the evaluation of the student's progress during faculty meetings or in writing letters of recommendation for future internship or job applications. This would make a significant difference in the appropriateness of the behavior of the players in this example. After all, if an evaluative role still existed, the dual relationship could not be considered "former."

Nonromantic Dual Role Relationships

Vignette: Babysitting the Mentor's Kids (APA Ethics Code 2.05: Delegation of Work to Others)

Dr. Sampson was an assistant professor who had two young children. She used to find babysitters for her kids elsewhere, but then she thought that some of her students might like to earn the extra money. She particularly and asking Julie, because she was good with kids. Julie, on the other hand, felt overwhelmed with her work and did not think she had the time to babysit. She hoped Dr. Sampson would understand if she refused, as she did not want to offend her.

Analysis. Mentor-student relationships that also constitute employer-employee relationships present dual relationships in which there is a further power differential between student and mentor. Field-related activities such as being a research assistant on a grant are generally more compatible with the mentor-student relationship since many of the expectations are similar—such as the professional education of the student. However, even in those situations, the mentor may expect the student to put his work above hers or to work extra hours at times when it is important to the research, even if this conflicts with the student's need for balance and attention to other activities, such as coursework or self-care. Activities such as babysitting, house cleaning, and unrelated clerical work, on the other hand, carry no expectations of professional growth.

When asked about a specific situation in which a professor hires a student, master's students reported concern about a professor's potential loss of objectivity (Kolbert et al., 2002). The hypothetical situation involved a professor hiring a student as a counselor whom she would supervise in her private practice as a means to assist the student after her departmental funding had been cut. Some students were concerned that the hiring of a financially struggling student may violate principles of fairness and that the student may not be the one most qualified for the position, whereas other students felt confident that the professor would clarify boundaries and expectations of their changing relationship in advance. Similarly, counselor education faculty responding to the same vignette felt that the external supervisory relationship could impair the professor's objectivity, but several

faculty considered the relationship acceptable as long as clear boundaries were set.

The APA Ethics Code (p. 5) advises that "Psychologists who delegate work to employees, supervisees, or research or teaching assistants or who use the services of others, such as interpreters, take reasonable steps to (1) avoid delegating such work to persons who have a multiple relationship with those being served that would likely lead to exploitation or loss of objectivity." To examine the meaning of "exploitation or loss of objectivity," we can go back to Kitchener's (1988) framework. Multiple relationships among individuals with a great power differential and multiple relationships with inconsistent expectations for the various roles are at a higher risk for exploitation or loss of objectivity. Multiple relationships involving money, like those involving sexual intimacy, are particularly troublesome since they fit both the above categories. Although it is important to be aware of the power difference, perhaps it is more feasible to be aware of and correct inconsistent role expectations. A multiple-role relationship has very different, potentially competing sets of demands. When these demands are in line, as in, "As your advisor, I want you to develop a certain skill set," and "As your supervisor, I want you to do clinical assessments and coordinate a research study," hopefully with the focus on professional development, the likelihood of exploitation is diminished. When these demands are distinct, as in, "As your advisor, I want you to work on your dissertation," and "As my babysitter, can you please bail me out this Saturday?" the likelihood for exploitation, or the misdirection of the student away from professional growth in favor of personal gain, increases. However, it seems that even in situations in which the work is consistent with the goal of professional growth of the student, students and faculty alike are concerned about potential loss of objectivity and/or exploitation if expectations and boundaries are not clearly set.

Vignette: Faculty-Student Friendships

Karen and Dr. Lee enjoy each other's company and often catch each other in the office to discuss school and life events. They frequently suggest nonprofessional books and movies to each other. Dr. Lee is not Karen's primary advisor but has supervised Karen in the past, taught a course she had taken, and currently serves on her dissertation committee. Karen may also have Dr. Lee as a supervisor or professor in the future. Karen and Dr. Lee frequently chat at school and email, and on a few occasions have invited each other to nonprofessional social events, such as a birthday party and a barbecue.

Analysis. Friendship suggests a relationship of mutuality, as well as the sharing of personal information and participation in nonprofessional activities. In friendships,

as in romantic relationships, expectations of the role may shift from the welfare and development of the student to the desire for a mutually gratifying relationship. Whereas mentor-mentee relationships are frequently mutually gratifying, the focus is on the professional development of the student. Within friendships, the focus is on mutual support and care. A qualitative study found that students in a counselor education master's program saw benefits to a professor-student friendship, but considered frequency of interactions, location of interactions, and topics of conversation as important determinants of the appropriateness of such a relationship (Kolbert et al., 2002). The majority of the students approved of such a professor-student friendship, but they described the relationship as primarily for the benefit of the student, contradicting the notion of mutuality inherent to friendship. Some students were also concerned that a friendship with a specific student would result in unequal benefits for that student (underscoring the point that appearances can have an impact on student welfare as well as realities, as students may well fear that they would lose out to the favored student when faculty make decisions about student placements or funding), and yet others considered that a professor may seek out an emotional relationship for the purpose of eventually establishing a sexual one. Counselor education professors responding to the same vignette cited many of the positive benefits of such a relationship for the student and also noted potential favoritism of the student, as well as potential exploitation of the student. The professors also mentioned greater difficulty in maintaining objectivity if friendships with students were the primary social outlet for the professor, and some mentioned that friendships were more appropriate with doctoral, rather than master's, students. There may also be a difference between a friendship with an advisor versus another faculty member in the department, especially one who no longer fills the dual role of a course instructor or supervisor. Even on such an occasion, however, faculty may still have a role in the evaluation of the student.

Several studies have found that one's own gender affects how college students judge the appropriateness of a nonsexual multiple-role relationship (Ei & Bowen, 2002; Holmes, Rupert, Ross, & Shapera, 1999; Owen & Zwahr-Castro, 2007). Activities such as doing favors for faculty and engaging in activities alone with a faculty member, as well as sexual relationships, were considered more inappropriate by female undergraduates than by male undergraduates (Ei & Bowen, 2002); engaging in an interaction in which a faculty member charged a student for tutoring was considered less appropriate by female than male undergraduates (Holmes et al., 1999). Situations involving academic/professional relationships, such as asking a student to return some books to the library for

the faculty member, asking a student to review a manuscript for an article he has just written, inviting a student to a lecture he is giving at the local YMCA, asking one student to tutor another one, and inviting a student to a professional meeting were considered more appropriate by female than male students.

Another study found that, of 33 role boundary situations examined, two situations were considered significantly less appropriate by female than male students (Owen & Zwahr-Castro, 2007). These were a professor going out for drinks with a student and a professor meeting a student off-campus to discuss a student's work. There were no significant differences between Mexican-American and Anglo-American students regarding the appropriateness of situations. In addition, one study found that female students had a different standard of what is appropriate for female and male faculty; they considered a male professor's interactions with students outside the classroom as more unethical than the same behaviors enacted by a female professor (Oldenburg, 2005). We kept the vignette above gender neutral for the faculty member. Would the interaction seem any more or less appropriate if Dr. Lee was the opposite gender than the one initially assumed at first reading?

The reader may be interested in a paper by Gottlieb, Robinson, and Younggren (2007), which describes and discusses a variety of multiple relationships among therapy supervisors and supervisees. The authors cogently make the case that it is not only the persons involved in these complex relationships who may be harmed by them, but also the larger community (e.g., the department, the service delivery unit), as well as the profession as a whole, consistent with some of the vignettes we have presented above.

Use and Misuse of Power

Vignette: Whose Dissertation Is It Anyway?

Whether or not the mentor chooses it, she inherits considerable power over her students. Shannon took on an ambitious dissertation, conducting a controlled treatment trial. She had defended her proposal, was relentless in recruiting participants, and after 10 months, 20 patients had completed the trial. Shannon's analyses revealed positive outcomes for the patients, but her low *N* restricted the analyses she was able to complete. Her advisor, Dr. Kim, was thrilled with the results and stated emphatically that it would be unthinkable for Shannon to end the study now. Dr. Kim saw the study as potential pilot data for a new grant. Despite the fact that her defended dissertation proposal did not require it, Shannon deferred to her advisor and dutifully continued recruitment for an additional year, after which she had enrolled a total of 50 participants. Dr. Kim noted that, at that point,

some of the analyses were of borderline significance and urged Shannon to recruit at least 10 more participants. Another 6 months and 8 participants later, Dr. Kim deemed Shannon finished with her data collection.

Analysis. The behavior of Dr. Kim is not necessarily unethical in the above situation. Dr. Kim may have been looking out for Shannon's best interests. After all, if Shannon included more patients, her chances for publication, or publication in a top-tier journal, would increase. If the treatment she was assessing was new, a sizable group of patients could make for a landmark study, something that would surely propel Shannon's career forward. Potentially, staying an extra year and a half would be worthwhile for Shannon. On the other hand, Shannon may not have been interested in doing the best possible study for her dissertation; she may have been interested in "just" doing a very good study. There may be a host of reasons: dwindling interest in research, a husband who has already taken a job at a distant location, or sheer restlessness to get on to the next phase of her professional and personal life. If Shannon had expressed these concerns to her advisor, and her advisor had disregarded them or implied that she would not allow Shannon's dissertation to move toward defense if she did not recruit 30 more patients, such behavior might reasonably be considered unethical. Surely it is the responsibility of the mentor to determine that a study is at the level of a dissertation. However, if the study is at that level, increasing the demands of the study, without the consent of the student, is exercising the mentor's power against the interest of the student.

Vignette: Changes in Publication Credit (APA Ethics Code 8.12: Publication Credit)

Brian was a master's student working with Dr. Laurence. Brian came up with the idea for his thesis and discussed it with Dr. Laurence. Using Dr. Laurence's archival data, Brian conducted the statistical analyses and wrote the thesis with guidance and feedback from Dr. Laurence. When Brian approached Dr. Laurence about publishing his thesis, Dr. Laurence told him that they would have to think about it because the results were not very compelling. Two years later, while reading a peer-reviewed journal, Brian came across his thesis, published with few changes, but with no mention of his name in the authorship line.

Analysis. Above we describe an extreme example, to be sure, but there are other more subtle variations on this theme. More common is a direct statement by the mentor that a student can conduct research under his or her supervision or using his or her sources of archival data, but only if the mentor is credited as first author. It is also

common for the student to believe that this is the case and to be hesitant to even bring up the issue for discussion.

Perhaps next to romantic relationships, publication credit is the most loaded issue in mentor-student, and likely other, professional academic relationships. Publications and authorship order often determine job opportunities, funding, and available resources, making them highly sought after (and potentially fought over). When publications matter for both mentor and student, the mentor's objectivity may be compromised on behalf of his own self-interest. Certainly, this seems to be the case in the situation with Brian and Dr. Laurence described above.

The APA Ethics Code outlines when publication credit should be given. Psychologists should take publication credit "only for work they have actually performed or to which they have substantially contributed" (p. 12). The Ethics Code also states that publication credit should be given independent of relative professional status (e.g., professor, postdoctoral fellow, graduate student). Rather, the Ethics Code instructs that authorship, including principal authorship, should be determined by relative scientific or professional contributions. Minor contributions in research or writing are to be acknowledged in a footnote or introductory statement. The Ethics Code also states that "a student is listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's doctoral dissertation" (p. 12). Faculty advisors are expected to discuss authorship decisions with students early in the process and to continue the conversation throughout the research and publication process. In fact, ethical practice hinges on a fair discussion with all involved parties and the absence of strong-arm tactics.

APA does not give direction regarding how much is a *substantial* contribution or completion of which aspects of the research process should lead to principal authorship. Several studies have asked psychologists and psychology students to rank the importance of various research tasks and reported that generation of the idea, design of the method, and writing of the report are the most important research tasks (Bartle, Fink, & Hayes, 2000; Spiegel & Keith-Spiegel, 1970). Another study surveying authors regarding authorship decisions for articles published in the 1989 volume of *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* similarly found that, of the 17 research tasks they were asked to rate, authors considered writing the article and having the research idea as the most important (Wagner, Dodds, & Bundy, 1994).

One study found that a positive academic and internship research training environment (which included positive reinforcement of students' initial research efforts) influenced research interest and scholarly productivity indirectly through improving research self-efficacy and research outcome expectations (Szymanski, Ozegovic, Phillips, & Briggs-Phillips, 2007). If the goal is to

raise the next generation of productive scholarly researchers, creating a positive research training environment with positive research outcome expectations is valuable. Giving credit where credit is due is not only good training, but it is the right thing to do.

Unhelpful Mentoring

In this section, we examine a few different patterns of unhelpful mentor behavior. The ethical issues raised here—unfortunately often overlooked in ethical discussion—involve the principle of putting the student first in the mentoring relationship.

Vignette: The Absentee Mentor

Jon finds it really difficult to get access to his advisor. The mentor is always in meetings or traveling and usually does not respond to email. When the mentor does respond via email, his answers are often clipped and just as often not on point, suggesting that he has not paid close attention to Jon's communications or has not taken them seriously.

Analysis. Some mentors are famous, world renowned, have written textbooks, and invented treatments; of course, this is part of what draws students to come work with them. Should they be expected to be available? In researching for this paper, one of us (AR) spoke with a number of doctoral students from several universities. One of them told her of his experience: "I moved halfway across the country to study with this guy and he has no time for me!" Many of us have experienced the elusive mentor; if you have been lucky enough not to have one, there may be one lurking in your department. You call, you email, you try to set up appointments, but it seems like he is always in Toronto, Miami, at a meeting, etc. Eventually you decide he is playing hard to get and give up. Although some mentors make it a practice of holding regular meetings with their students, not doing so is not necessarily a problem, as long as some system of communication is in place. Beyond the intangible benefits of the mentor's wisdom, students need mentors to discuss the design of their degree projects, to return their manuscript drafts in a timely way, to sign off on the seemingly endless documents for funding or registration, to write letters of recommendation, etc. When the student is unable to schedule meetings with the mentor and when the mentor is unwilling to pay attention to the student's needs, the student can be left high and dry. One wonders why this mentor is in this line of work!

Vignette: The Mentor Who Does Not Mentor

Jen is applying for internship for the following year. She meets with her advisor to discuss the sites she should apply to and to talk about the application process. She asks whether she is a good fit for the sites to which she is

intending to apply. Dr. Field reassures Jen that she will do fine and that she is a good match for her choice of sites. When she asks him to look over her application, Dr. Field replies that if she really wants him to, he can do it, but that it is really unnecessary. He tells her that all of his students in the past have gone to the best internship sites and that she will as well. Although this statement is meant to relieve Jen's anxieties, it provides reassurance in the absence of direction. Jen is surprised when she is invited to only a few internship interviews from a large number of applications.

Analysis. Somewhat different from the absentee mentor, this mentor may be physically available and quick to answer emails and phone calls. However, this mentor may not give specific guidance at times of importance in the student's development. This may occur for a number of reasons: the mentor may feel unqualified to give advice; the mentor may not believe the issue is important enough to warrant much time or attention; the mentor may believe that, although the issue is important, the student should have no reason for concern; or the mentor may not wish to upset the student by delivering constructive but difficult critical feedback. Although this example focuses on internship advising, it could have concerned any issue of importance in the student's development. Mentoring involves consideration of many sides of an issue at the same time. It often involves helping the student to determine what aspects of a situation are important and worthy of the student's attention. It may involve attending to the student's concerns and serving an anxiety management function, but it may also involve providing the student with feedback about past or current performance that may inform the student's decision making, something that some mentors may be loathe to do. Providing reassurance in the absence of data relevant to the specific student and failing to provide critical feedback to a student that may help her improve her performance or choose one training option over another is often the easier path, but it does little to help the student along the way to achieving her goals. Of course, if the mentor does not believe that he or she has the relevant expertise, a referral to another faculty member may be in order. Otherwise, however, it is more than possible that the mentor's failures may contribute to poor decisions and unsatisfactory outcomes for the student. Failure to provide critical feedback (e.g., not telling a student that his clinical skills need improvement in specific areas and how this may be accomplished) and allowing the student to move ahead without this knowledge is an all-too-common ethical breach.

Vignette: The Punitive, Hypercritical Mentor

Jon submitted a draft of his master's thesis to his advisor, Dr. Arabella. Dr. Arabella returned the thesis,

partially read, stating he would not waste his time editing the paper until it was at a “graduate student level.” Dr. Arabella said the thesis was the poorest writing he has seen in his 20 years of mentoring students and that Jon was not fit to be a graduate student. Jon walked away from the conversation ashamed and upset, wondering whether he should have gone into a different field and whether it was too late to do so now. He still was not sure what “graduate student level” writing was or what could be done to improve the quality of his own work.

Analysis. Some mentors may believe that inspiring fear in their students is an effective way to “teach” and “motivate.” Perhaps they believe that this approach will encourage the student to put in more effort or take the subject matter more seriously. However, the average doctoral student dedicates much effort and care to his work, and intimidation may not be the best approach to help him along. Alternatively, a mentor may not feel inclined to control his temper, reasoning that any student is lucky to work with him regardless of how he provides feedback.

Such hypercriticism can take a great personal and professional toll on the student. We know of students working long term with unreasonably harsh mentors who have become clinically depressed and even suicidal. Although these are extreme examples, it is very typical for students to react with shame and misdirection, becoming haunted by a subject that was once inspiring. In such an environment, students are forced to become less creative and innovative, to take fewer chances, and to behave in a manner that they believe will allow them to do damage control. Of course, they do not learn this from the mentor's constructive feedback, but rather from other students, trial and error, or by studying the mentor's theoretical framework, general views, and writing style and only offering ideas and material that stay well within these “lines.”

Additionally, because of the power differential, students may not have a clear understanding about when the mentor's behavior is unacceptable and should not to be tolerated. Of course, there are also students who view truly constructive feedback as a personal attack, and they must learn not to do so. But what is the difference between appropriate criticism and unacceptable hypercriticism? Take a few moments to consider the vignette above. How could it be rewritten as an example of constructive feedback? Discuss the various benefits to the student and mentor of using a constructive versus punitive approach. Are there any costs to either party of using a more constructive approach?

Vignette: Restriction With No Alternative

Jeremy is an advanced student who did not receive departmental funding through a research assistantship,

teaching assistantship, or instructor position this year. Although he is busy working on his dissertation, other research projects, seeing clients, and taking a class, he cannot afford to earn no money (and still pay tuition!) during the semester. Although he received funding in previous years, Jeremy had still taken out loans to supplement his income. In addition, Jeremy still has loans from his undergraduate institution. Jeremy had expected to get funding this year and now that he has not, he is disappointed. He considers possible ways he could earn extra money and discusses them with his advisor. These include working at the supermarket, teaching study techniques for SATs to high school kids, and painting houses. His mentor is outraged by the idea of Jeremy doing nonprofessional work and tells Jeremy that taking any one of these positions would preclude him from getting a competitive internship and having a productive academic career. He says that Jeremy should chalk it up to the demands of graduate school and take out another loan.

Analysis. Although few psychology graduate students come to the field in hopes of making outrageous fortunes, a rare one does not consider financial matters during the course of graduate school. Even those lucky to be funded for the duration of their studies often take additional loans. This may be especially necessary in popular metropolitan areas. Usually students who receive funding are contracted not to (and too busy to) do additional external work.

In the case of Jeremy, on the one hand the advisor may be right—nonprofessional work will take time away from other activities while adding little to Jeremy's professional resume. On the other hand, the advisor takes an extreme position. Also, the advisor does not consider Jeremy's perspective in earnest. It may be difficult for the advisor, who may have forgotten the burden of loans and having no other visible means of support, to put himself in Jeremy's place. It may be helpful to suggest some alternative jobs in the field that Jeremy could look into. If the advisor were to prevent Jeremy from taking a job, without offering internal funding or ideas for professionally related employment, he would potentially be wielding his power in a coercive manner.

Concluding Comments

Through our impressions, as well as our survey of the literature, we have identified several categories for potential ethical pitfalls in the mentor-student relationship. These are romantic and nonromantic dual relationships, the misuse of power for professional gain, and failure to put the student first in the mentoring relationship. These all share the similar underlying principles of loss of objectivity and potential exploitation. As psychologists, we strive for objectivity or, at the least, perspective taking. It is not

surprising, then, that our ethical pitfalls occur when we have let our own interests eclipse the interest of the individual we are teaching or when we are unable or unwilling to view a situation from the student's perspective. We do not suggest faculty should *always* agree with the student perspective; however, we suggest a willingness to consider it. The principles of loss of objectivity and potential exploitation may also be relevant in other ethically ambiguous mentor-student situations that are outside the scope of this article. It is important for the mentor to be forever vigilant and aware that loss of objectivity may also occur for the student regarding his own self-interest in the relationship with the more powerful mentor. It is also worthwhile to remember that ethical breaches within the mentor-student relationship are rarely isolated to that relationship. The implications can be great for the larger learning community, as well as our profession as a whole (Gottlieb et al., 2007). As an example, recall the vignette of Dr. Walters and Raina, the doctoral student with whom he had a romantic relationship. The effects on the other students working for Dr. Walters were striking. Since it is a virtual certainty that students will talk among themselves, the level of trust among all students and faculty in the department would be diminished.

Finally, our goal is not to shackle the mutually beneficial mentor-student relationship with rigid rules. After all, for most of the vignettes depicted above, the answer as to whether the situation was ethical was typically "it depends." We hope, rather, that choices are made consciously and thoughtfully, with the thorough consideration of multiple viewpoints and personal motivations.

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