

## The Daily Dozen

Asking yourself questions can be a good “check and balance” to see if pressure is clouding or affecting your good judgment. The purpose of these self-check questions is to help correctional staff members identify when they might be getting close to crossing ethical and professional boundaries. The questions are as follows:

- Do you look forward to seeing a particular offender when you come to work?
- Have you done anything with an offender that you would not want your family or your supervisor to know about?
- Would you be reluctant to have a co-worker observe your behavior for an entire day?
- Do you talk about your personal matters with offenders?
- Do you believe you can ask an offender to do personal favors for you?
- Have you ever received personal advice from an offender?
- Have you said anything to an offender that you would not want tape recorded?
- Do you have thoughts or fantasies of touching a particular offender? Does this extend to planning how you can be alone with that offender?
- Do you think you have the right to touch an offender whenever and wherever you want to?
- Do you look forward to sharing good/ bad news with a particular offender?
- Do you think offenders are not allowed to say “no” to you, no matter what you ask?
- Have you ever allowed an offender to talk to you about sexual experiences or sexual fantasies, or to tell sexual jokes in your presence? Have you ever shared these things with an offender?
- If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, you may be in danger — sexual misconduct often begins as over-familiarity with an offender. Even offering an offender something you may think is simple and harmless, such as candy or soda, can begin to break down professional boundaries. This is particularly important because in some facilities, correctional staff come from the same communities.
- You may share schools, friend, and sometimes even family. But it is your responsibility to treat all offenders the same and in accordance with your agency’s policies.
- Correctional administrators also have a responsibility to assist and support staff members. Administrators need to ask if their agency does the following to prevent staff sexual misconduct with offenders:
  - adequately train and supervise staff
  - minimize role ambiguity within the agency (make it clear where boundaries between staff as helpers and staff as keepers should be drawn)
  - have adequate staffing so staff are not required to work excessive overtime to fill gaps limit overcrowding and case loads as much as possible
  - minimize the isolation of staff members from their peers
  - minimize staff turn-over
- have zero tolerance for retaliation against those who report sexual misconduct
- develop a system of anonymous reporting of incidents of sexual misconduct
- offer safe avenues for staff who seek help
- protect staff who come forward to report misconduct