

# Workshop Ethics - Scenarios for Discussion

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Here are six scenarios that can be used to promote discussion about ethical and professional issues related to outreach.

For each of the following scenarios, please answer each of the following questions:

- What should you do?
- What are the ethical or professional issues involved?
- Is there anything you should have said or done to prevent this situation?

## **Scenario # 1.**

You have just presented a half-day afternoon workshop to a professional audience. At the conclusion, an attractive workshop participant who seemed particularly interested in the topic asks you some thought-provoking questions about the topic as the other participants leave the room. You begin an animated discussion about the topic. After about ten minutes, the participant asks you if you want to continue the discussion over a cup of coffee. You don't have any plans for the next few hours.

## **Scenario # 2.**

You are presenting a workshop on domestic violence prevention to a community group. During the workshop, a female participant begins to disclose about her own struggles with an abusive partner. Her disclosures are personal and detailed and she seems to be seeking emotional support rather than education from the workshop group. You sense that other workshop participants are getting uncomfortable with her sharing and you are having a hard time sticking to your outline.

## **Scenario # 3.**

You are presenting a workshop on cultural diversity. Your cofacilitator is less experienced than you and you are the "lead facilitator." During a workshop segment that your cofacilitator is presenting, one participant begins to ask provocative questions that challenge some of your assumptions about the value of diversity. These comments gradually escalate and eventually the participant begins to refer to your cofacilitator's ethnicity using mild racial slurs. Your cofacilitator seems upset and flustered but continues to present the material on the outline.

## **Scenario # 4.**

You are preparing to present a three-part psychoeducational group on surviving the loss of a love. You feel a bit uneasy about the topic because after you began planning the group, the person you had been dating for about a year abruptly and painfully broke off the relationship. A few hours before the first meeting, you look over the sign-up sheet that your receptionist has been keeping. You notice that your former partner has signed up for the workshop. You check the flyers and realize that the publicity had gone out without your name as the facilitator. You are not sure if your former partner knows that you'll be presenting the workshop or not.

## **Scenario # 5.**

You are invited to participate on a panel discussion on a topic of professional interest. One of the other speakers is a psychologist that you have heard was interested in the same topic. You are

looking forward to meeting her and hearing her speak. As she is beginning to speak, you realize that she is providing information that is at least 10 years out of date. You are aware of many recent studies which come to a very different conclusions about the topic. The speaker is very charismatic and persuasive and people seem to be very interested in her thoughts. You feel, however, that her presentation will mislead people and result in distorted information about important psychological issues.

**Scenario # 6.**

You have agreed to provide a workshop on couples communication to a residence hall group. When you arrive at the hall, you see posters which contain misleading publicity about your program. The posters suggest that you will be teaching participants, "What to say to get your partner hot and heavy using verbal foreplay" and other provocative statements about the content of your workshop.