Chapter 2
Specific Concerns for Teachers, School Counselors, and Administrators

David Edward Christopher
Juniata Valley School District, USA

ABSTRACT
This chapter describes the types of sexual misconduct most prevalent in schools and the types of professional conduct needed by educators to counteract these inappropriate behaviors. Teachers, school counselors, and administrators will learn the best ways to organize the physical space in several types of instructional settings as well as maintain professional interactions with students in all settings. Additionally, educators will learn to evaluate their own behaviors and how they may inadvertantly be promoting inappropriate relationships between themselves and the students in their schools.

INTRODUCTION
There has never been a time when school teachers, counselors, and administrators have come under greater scrutiny for actions related to sexual misconduct within the work place. It is critically important for all educators to have training to ensure that their personal conduct and the conduct of the other employees in their schools remains appropriate at all times.

Key Points
- Know what behaviors can be interpreted as inappropriate
- Understand how to maintain a professional relationship with students
- Know how to create an atmosphere of respect and equality
- Understand the physical space where interactions with students take place and how to ensure that it is organized appropriately

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0657-7.ch002
Specific Concerns for Teachers, School Counselors, and Administrators

- Understand how staying on task and focused on learning outcomes creates a professional relationship with students and lessens the probability of inappropriate conduct
- Know how to maintain appropriate boundaries while working with students
- Know how to spot inappropriate behavior in the workplace
- Understand how using social media and electronic communication can invite scrutiny and create the appearance of seeking inappropriate student contact

Sexual misconduct by school employees has quickly become one of the most pressing challenges facing schools today. A 2007 investigation by the Associated Press found that more than 2,500 educators were punished for inappropriate actions with students over a span of 5 years (Irvine & Tanner, 2007). While this investigation by the U. S. media brought the problem of abuse to the forefront of the national discussion, it paled in comparison to the scrutiny that was to be brought to the topic in 2011. In that year, news of a scandal at Penn State University involving a revered coach, Jerry Sandusky, and the failure of the prestigious university’s administration to stop the abuses he was committing, rocked the country and made the prevention of sexual abuse a national priority (Bumsted, 2011). In response to these stories and the significant media coverage afforded to them, many states proposed and made significant changes to background check requirements, further criminalized sexually deviant behavior with students, and placed a much higher burden on educators to report suspected abuse (Press, 2008), (O’Boyle, 2015).

This chapter will examine how teachers, counselors, and administrators can ensure that their behavior is viewed as appropriate at all times. Additionally, school employees will learn how they can identify inappropriate behavior in those around them and the steps they can take to address inappropriate behavior before it leads to sexual misconduct.

MAKING GOOD DECISIONS

Educators must be intentional in their interactions with students. Making good decisions that promote the health and welfare of students and ensure that school environments remain safe and supportive places is a fundamental responsibility of all individuals who work in schools. Many times, educators who become involved in inappropriate interactions with students begin their journey down this path through a series of poor choices. These educators later state that they knew the choices they were making were wrong, but did not heed their own inner conscience (Fibkins, 2005). Conversely, school employees who intentionally make appropriate choices with regards to student relationships and boundaries greatly reduce the likelihood that they will become involved in an inappropriate relationship or will even be accused of unprofessional conduct.

TYPES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN SCHOOLS

Employee misconduct in schools has been categorized in many ways. In 2004, the United States Department of Education commissioned a study into the area of sexual abuse in schools. The report, prepared by Charol Shakeshaft, found that not only was sexual abuse in schools a greater problem than had been previously perceived, the magnitude of the issue was on a scale not previously considered by schools or the public at large. Shakeshaft reviewed literature from other studies in the United States and in the