

Handout 9

A Self-Assessment Checklist

As spiritual leaders all of us are at risk of crossing boundaries inappropriately, thereby violating our roles and abusing those who are vulnerable. But we can reduce this risk through self-knowledge and self-care. If we understand our personal history and its effects on us, our behavior and perceptions are less likely to be shaped by that history. If we are aware of our personal needs and taking care of those needs in appropriate ways, we are less likely to impose them inappropriately upon our ministerial relation-

ships. Furthermore, if we are aware of the power implicit in our role and how that power affects those we serve and supervise, we are less likely to misuse that power.

Use this checklist to assess your risk of violating boundaries. If you answer no to the first question in "Personal History," skip to the questions under "Psychosexual Integration." An answer of no to any question except the first indicates an area in which self-awareness and self-monitoring are crucial.

Personal History

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | Does my personal or family history include sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, or other family dysfunction? |
| Yes | No | Am I coming to terms with the issues and feelings involved in my personal history?
Am I able to identify areas in my history where I need healing? |
| Yes | No | Am I taking steps to address the areas where I need healing? |

Psychosexual Integration

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | Have I discussed my sexual history with someone (a professional or a friend)? |
| Yes | No | Am I comfortable with my sexual orientation? |
| Yes | No | Do I monitor my sexual fantasies for inappropriate persons such as children, clients, congregants, employees, etc.? |
| Yes | No | Are my personal friendships and intimate relationships appropriate and not involving anyone with whom I have a professional relationship? |
| Yes | No | Am I able to identify my emotional and sexual needs and meet them appropriately? |

Personal/Professional Self

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | Am I meeting my personal needs outside of my work setting? |
| Yes | No | Do I acknowledge the power inherent in my professional role? |
| Yes | No | Am I aware of the effects of that power on those with whom I interact, for example, the attraction that power holds for some people? |
| Yes | No | Am I aware of the consequences to me of violating the boundaries that are inherent in my role as a spiritual leader? |
| Yes | No | Do I have a consultation or supervision setting in which I can discuss these questions? |

—adapted from Marie M. Fortune, *Clergy Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship*