



► **Scenario 8**

**Stress Management Group in Mental Health Services/Addictions**

You are a 30-year-old female occupational therapist who has been contracted to facilitate a 12-session stress management program for clients with concurrent disorders (mental illness and addiction). The program is targeted at a fairly high-functioning population, and sessions are held in the early evenings as many of the group members are working or taking courses during the day.

From the beginning a couple of group members have been challenging; they tend to contradict what you say, and try to monopolize the sessions. However one group member, George, has been a godsend, as he often comes to your defence and stands up to the challengers in a way that you, as facilitator, cannot. Moreover, George is well-respected in the group in general, as he is articulate and funny, and is able to smooth things over when there is tension. You've tried to be very professional and equitable in your interactions with all of the program members, but you are aware that you seem to have a special connection with George, and you've made efforts to try not to let this show.

The stress management program is now nearing its end, with two weeks more to go. Over the past couple of weeks, you've bumped into George at the coffee shop where you tend to go before each session. You and he have had several conversations that have become more social in nature, and you have learned that you have many interests in common, and even a few common acquaintances. Last week, George suggested that you and he continue to see each other after the group program ends. You didn't commit to anything, but you didn't say "no" either.

Tonight as the session gets under way, one of the clients who has been challenging in the past starts to confront you, disagreeing about one of the stress management techniques that you have been teaching to the group. As you attempt to address his concerns, he snickers and says, "Why don't you just get your boyfriend to tell me to shut up?" and looks pointedly at George. From the giggles around the room, it's clear to you that there has been talk about your relationship with George. He just smiles and doesn't seem to be at all perturbed, and in fact seems to be somewhat amused by your reaction.

**Some Warning Signs/Risk Factors**

- Attracted to client.
- You did not refuse invitation to see client after the program ends.
- Other clients notice relationship.



## Work Sheet

### Scenario 8 Stress Management Group in Mental Health Services/Addictions

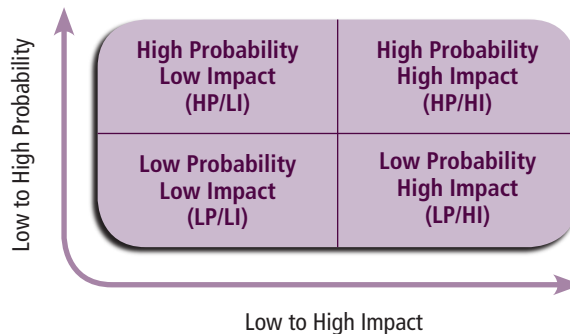
#### STEP ONE

Identify the risk factors under each area:

- Client's Vulnerability \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Therapeutic Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Practice Setting \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Therapist's Skills and Knowledge Level \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### STEP TWO

Given the risk factors, categorize the risk:



#### STEP THREE

Ways to Mitigate the Risk

Review the professional boundaries listed under each of the *Essential Competencies* (pages 5-9) in *Drawing the Line: Guidelines for Establishing Professional Boundaries to Prevent Sexual Misconduct*, to identify the strategies that would help you to prevent sexual misconduct in this scenario.

1. Assumes Professional Responsibility \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Demonstrates Practice Knowledge \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Utilizes a Practice Process \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Thinks Critically \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Communicates Effectively \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Engages in Professional Development \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Manages the Practice Environment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_