



## Unit 4: Professional Boundaries

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# Introductions

## Faculty

- Name, Title
- Experience with PREA and/or training

## Participants

- Name and Position



# Employee Training Series Outline

This training is part of series of trainings to assist agencies with PREA Standards 115.31, 115.131, 115.231, and 115.331

Unit 1:	The Prison Rape Elimination Act: Overview of the Law and Your Role
Unit 2:	Inmates' Rights to be Free from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment and Staff and Inmate Rights to be Free from Retaliation for Reporting
Unit 3 Part I:	Prevention and Detection
Unit 3 Part II:	Response and Reporting
Unit 4:	Professional Boundaries and False Allegations
Unit 5:	Effective and Professional Communication with Inmates

# Objectives for Unit 4

1. Recognize inappropriate behavior, contact or relationships between staff and inmates
2. Understand the safety vulnerabilities and implications for facility culture when staff breach professional boundaries with inmates
3. Develop strategies to avoid inappropriate relationships with inmates
4. Develop strategies to avoid and address false allegations

# Objective 1: Recognize inappropriate behavior, contact or relationships between staff and inmates

## To meet this objective we will discuss

- Reasons why relationships may occur in confinement settings between staff and inmates
- Identify inappropriate behaviors

# Let's Discuss

- We all know relationships with inmates are inappropriate, against the rules, and can create safety issues
- So why do you think it happens?
- It is a complicated issue!



# Understanding the Mix of Dynamics in Confinement Settings

- Confinement settings are complex:
  - Same community
  - Know inmates long-term at the facility
  - Staff may have their own vulnerabilities
  - Closeness in age between staff and inmates
- This can create challenges in maintaining professional boundaries
- Remember, in confinement there is no such thing as staff-inmate consensual relationships

# Group Discussion

## Discuss in small groups:

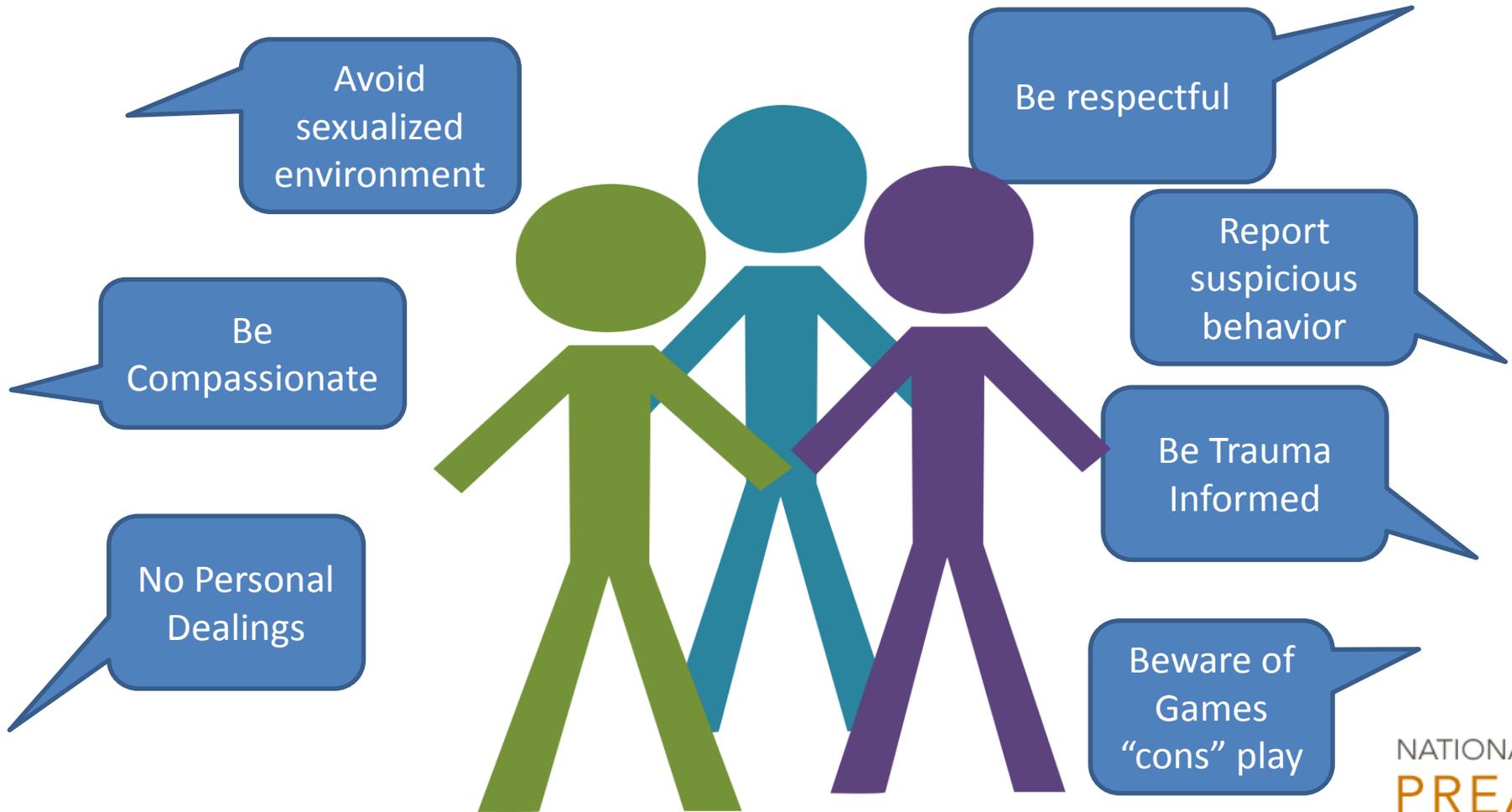
- What behaviors have you seen in facilities that blurred or crossed professional boundaries?
- What are some behaviors that could be considered in the “gray area”?
- What might be challenging in maintaining professional boundaries?



# Examples of Inappropriate Behaviors

- Some behaviors that can put you at risk of crossing professional boundaries include:
  - Making sexual jokes with inmates or in front of inmates
  - Using inmate nicknames instead of proper terminology dictated by policy
  - Discussing personal issues with inmates or in front of inmates
  - Allowing a favorite inmate to have special privileges
  - Feeling like you can trust an inmate to have your back
  - Doing special favors for inmates (contacting outside family members or bringing in contraband)
  - Getting involved with inmate issues
  - Gossiping about other staff with inmates or in front of inmates
  - Complaining about supervisors or your job with inmates
- Can you think of any others?

# Messages to Staff: What is expected?



# PREA and Boundaries

## What Can You Do?

- Observe and learn the patterns and behaviors of the inmates you supervise to better prevent, detect and respond to sexual abuse
- Be approachable and respectful by using professional communication
- Remember your role with inmates and refer them to appropriate staff
- Follow your agency policy

## Objective 2: Understand the safety vulnerabilities and implications for facility culture when staff breach professional boundaries with inmates

### **To meet this objective we will discuss:**

- How staff-inmate relationships:
  - Impact professionalism and agency credibility
  - Impact staff and inmate safety
  - Impact facility culture and community

# Professionalism Compromised

## **Inappropriate staff-inmate relationships...**

- Jeopardize security
- Victimize/re-traumatize those vulnerable from past abuse situations
- Damage trust among staff, inmates, families, volunteers and contractors
- Violate constitutionally-guaranteed rights of inmates
- Create a hostile/sexualized work environment
- Expose entire agency and staff to civil and criminal liability
- Polarize the department as people take sides
- Create bad media/press
- Undermine public support for corrections and for government

# Safety Compromised

## **Inappropriate staff-inmate relationships...**

- Result in contraband being brought into the facility
- Create an opportunity for inmates to access restricted areas
- Can provide inmates with access to information on security and operations at the facility
- Put the staff in a precarious situation, beholden to inmate requests for fear of being found out
- Create distrust with co-workers, who will have your back?
- Staff stop thinking clearly about safety and security, focused on the relationship

# Culture Compromised

## **Inappropriate staff-inmate relationships...**

- Create a sexualized work environment
- Create a culture of secrecy and code of silence
- Create a culture of accepting inappropriate behaviors, makes staff uncomfortable to go to work
- Can result in unwanted media attention, lawsuits, investigations
- Damage lives (staff, victims and families impacted)

# Objective 3: Develop strategies to avoid inappropriate relationships with inmates

## To meet this objective we will discuss:

- Questions to ask yourself to maintain boundaries
- How to help your co-workers if they are close to crossing professional boundaries
- Policy to guide actions and behaviors

# Answer these Questions:

1	Do you look forward to seeing a particular inmate when you come to work?	Yes or No?
2	Have you done anything with an inmate you would not want your family or your supervisor to know about?	Yes or No?
3	Would you be reluctant to have a co-worker observe your behavior for a whole day?	Yes or No?
4	Do you talk about your personal matters with inmates?	Yes or No?
5	Do you believe you can ask an inmate to do personal favors for you?	Yes or No?
6	Have you ever received personal advice from an inmate?	Yes or No?
7	Have you said anything to an inmate that you would not want tape recorded?	Yes or No?
8	Do you have thoughts or fantasies of touching a particular inmate? Does this extend into planning how you can be alone with the inmate?	Yes or No?
9	Do you think you have the right to touch an inmate wherever and whenever you want to?	Yes or No?
10	Do you have a feeling of not being able to wait to share good/bad news with a particular inmate?	Yes or No?
11	Do you think inmates are not allowed to say no to you, no matter what you ask?	Yes or No?
12	Have you ever allowed inmates to talk about sexual experiences or sexual fantasies, or to tell sexual jokes in your presence?	Yes or No?

Source: "The Dangerous Dozen" by Teena Farnon

# What if you Answered “Yes”?

- It is important to address your concerns if you answered “yes” to any of the previous questions
- Utilize employee assistance, if applicable
- Seek guidance from a supervisor
- Seek support professionally or from a trusted source

# What about your Co-Worker?

- What if you notice a co-worker who is demonstrating some of the signs we discussed?
- Depending on the severity of behaviors, you can talk with your co-worker and make sure they are ok, tell him/her what you have noticed about their behavior and try to help them
- If you suspect sexual abuse you must report it

# Remember: Follow Your Agency Policy

- Policy should guide ethics, values and behavior
- Guidelines from policy might include:
  - Do not share personal information
  - Do not socialize within or outside the workplace
  - Do not give legal advice
  - Do not grant special favors
  - Do not give or accept gifts
  - Do not gamble or make bets
  - What's in your policy?

# Develop Strategies

## Individual Exercise

- Write on a piece of paper strategies you can use to avoid inappropriate relationships
- Examples may include:
  - Follow policy
  - Avoid being alone with inmates, consistent with agency policy
  - Think about how I communicate and what I say, am I being professional?
  - Develop personal values and guidelines to follow everyday
  - Identify someone to talk to if you feel you are vulnerable

# Small Group Discussion

## **In your groups:**

- Review the assigned scenario(s) and reach a group consensus of how the staff person in question should handle the situation
- Hold your answer until asked to share with the larger group



# Objective 4: Develop strategies to avoid and address false allegations

## **To meet this objective we will discuss:**

- Ways staff can avoid false allegations through policy and practice
- Challenges of false allegations and ways to respond

# Strategies to Avoid False Allegations

- For anyone working in corrections, you may face a false allegation against you
- What can you do?
  - Maintain respectful and professional communication at all times
  - Clearly establish your professional boundaries with staff and inmates
  - Create credibility among inmates and staff through being fair and policy-minded
  - Other suggestions?

# False Allegations Can Occur

- False allegations can be personally and professionally challenging
- Investigations are critical even in false allegations, it maintains credibility of the system and can clear your name
- Do not spread rumors or gossip about the person in question
- Educate inmates on the damage false allegations can create on personal lives, the facility, and their own lives should something serious need to be reported
- When sexual abuse is addressed in policy and practice, there may be an initial spike in both legitimate and false allegations

# Disciplinary Sanction for Inmates, 115.78

- For the purpose of disciplinary action, a report of sexual abuse made in good faith based upon a reasonable belief that the alleged conduct occurred shall not constitute falsely reporting an incident or lying, even if an investigation does not establish evidence sufficient to substantiate the allegation
- What does your policy state regarding disciplinary sanctions for inmates who make false allegations?
- The challenge is maintaining a reporting culture by not punishing those who are making reports in good faith

# Group Discussion

## **In Small Groups, discuss:**

- Why do you think false allegations might occur?
- How can you as staff respond?



# Individual Exercise

## **What is Your Commitment?**

- Create a list of five practical things you can do at work tomorrow (or the next day you return) as a result of this training
- Share three of them with your group

# Review Objectives for Unit 4

1. Recognize inappropriate behavior, contact or relationships between staff and inmates
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# End of Unit 4

