

DUAL RELATIONSHIP SCALE	
<b>High risk</b>	
Risk of serious harm	<i>Prohibited behaviour (e.g., sexual relationships)</i>
<b>Moderate risk</b>	
Risk of moderate harm	<i>Highly discouraged behaviour (e.g., friendships with clients, treating relatives, treating friends, merging role of teacher and therapist)</i>
<b>Low risk</b>	
Risk of unlikely harm	<i>Discouraged behaviour (e.g., bartering for services, socializing with clients, accepting gratuities)</i>
<b>Unlikely risk</b>	
Risk of unforeseeable harm	<i>Individual discretion (e.g., any type of behaviour which does not fall into the above categories but which could merge roles)</i>

### High Risk

The first type of dual relationships on the scale are defined as high risk. These are situations which pose the greatest potential for harm to the patient. The most obvious example is a sexual relationship with a patient, which is almost universally prohibited by law and by professional codes of ethics.

To sexualize a therapeutic relationship, regardless of whether the therapist or the patient initiates it, detracts from the goals of that role. Experience shows that this type of relationship frequently causes harm to the client. Therefore, the penalty for this kind of behaviour is severe: a therapist who has had a sexual relationship with a patient will often be forced to forfeit his or her license.

### Moderate Risk

Moderate risk dual relationship scenarios include behaviours that are not expressly prohibited by law but are usually strongly discouraged in professional codes of ethics, guidelines for practice, and/or official policy statements of regulating bodies. Specific examples in this category include forming friendships with clients; treating relatives or friends, or their relatives or friends; or combining the roles of teacher and therapist.

### Low Risk

Behaviours where the potential for harm to the client is judged as less than the two previous categories are included in the low risk category. Specific examples of low risk relationships include bartering for services, accepting a gratuity, and socializing with clients outside of the office. In terms of legal and ethical standards, behaviour in this category is discouraged rather than explicitly prohibited: these behaviours would not usually attract serious con-