



## Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2011

### I2 Fatal Attractions: Women Who Have Affairs With Their Inmate Patients

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to: (1) identify risk factors in females working in secure facilities that lead them to sexual entanglements with inmates; (2) identify the types of inmates who are likely to attract female staff members; (3) understand the psychodynamics of these relationships; and, (4) become familiar with legislation in various jurisdictions applicable to these relationships.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by identifying individuals and institutions at risk for these dangerous liaisons between therapist or corrections staff and inmates, and helping institutions and supervisors implement programs to prevent this type of behavior.

Psychiatrists, psychologists, and all other types of therapists know that romantic and sexual involvement with patients is inappropriate, unethical, and not covered by malpractice insurance. Nevertheless, these types of relationships do occur and occasionally are described in the media. Recent years have inundated us with stories of teachers having sex with their pupils and the media have sensationalized many of these cases, especially when the teacher is someone young and attractive. The teacher-pupil relationship is a good model for the therapist-patient relationship, but of course it is not exactly the same.

Some of the inappropriate romantic and sexual relationships that can and do occur between mismatched participants will be discussed. Some of these relationships are clearly morally and legally reprehensible, such as a sexual relationship between an adult and a child.

The history of some of these relationships will be examined – at one time, sex between professor and student was somewhat acceptable, especially between a male professor and a female student. Then that type of relationship was re-defined as inappropriate and abusive of the female. Once, a male doctor could have sex with a female patient, and if they ended up married, there was no inappropriate relationship. Today, this sort of situation would be scandalous. If the doctor is a psychiatrist, then this behavior is inappropriate and unethical, and in some states, illegal. The gender of the doctor and the gender of the patient are irrelevant. Some of the features of and statistics about these relationships will be reviewed which may be surprising to some. Anecdotal information will be presented, of course with all identifying information changed far beyond recognition.

What happens when a therapist works with a patient inside a correctional institution or a quasi-correctional facility such as a forensic hospital or sex-offender facility? These therapists have even more of a responsibility to their patients because frequently their input is utilized in assessing dangerousness and making recommendations for parole or community release. Do therapists (of any degree level) get involved with their inmate patients? Unfortunately, they do.

In this presentation, first, the laws and the ethical implications and applications of sex with inmate patients will be reviewed and discussed.

Then the research into this type of behavior will be reviewed – the general research into sex with patients, and then the research about specific sexual activity between therapist and patient in correctional institutions. More surprising statistics will be presented. Then cases in the popular media will be reviewed and discussed with the audience. There will be no attempt made to diagnose the individuals discussed, but rather, the presentation will be an educational experience in which the participants will attempt to identify some of the risk factors presented in

the literature review in the cases that came to the attention of the popular media, to identify the psychodynamics of these relationships, and perhaps identify some potential ways to prevent this type of behavior. **Female Psychopaths, Sex With Inmates, Borderline**