



## CBF Peer Learning Groups

### Maintaining ethical professional relationships

“Dual relationships” and “multiple relationships” are terms that are used to describe the assumption of two or more roles/relationships at the same time or sequentially with someone a professional works with or supervises. For example, the primary role for congregational leaders is most often that of being a pastor or minister of some sort. In light of the relational nature of the church, however, it is easy for roles to broaden.

Such additional roles may not be inherently bad. If pastors are not conscious of the boundaries that must be maintained to keep relationships balanced and healthy, however, there can be potential for hurt. Common ethical dilemmas include violations of confidentiality, inappropriate self-disclosure, and inappropriate personal relationships. Every minister must discern how to handle potential dilemmas based on their own self-awareness and the potential for harm.

Some conflicts are unavoidable, but looking out for foreseeable conflicts and having frank conversations can help prevent misunderstandings, hurt, and uncomfortable situations.

#### *Questions for discussion:*

- What are some examples of dual relationships that you maintain or that you have observed in congregational life?
- Consider the types of relationships presented in the attached table. Brainstorm with your PLG to identify permissible behaviors (green light), behaviors that require caution (yellow light), and those that should always be avoided (red light).
- Given your discussion about the table, what commitments do you need to make to strengthen your personal and professional boundaries?
- What is the first step in carrying out each of these commitments?
- What encouragement and support do you need from your PLG to implement your steps?

### Dual relationships table

	<b>Red light</b>	<b>Yellow light</b>	<b>Green light</b>
<b>Personal relationships with congregants</b>			
<b>Staff relationships</b>			
<b>Social media relationships</b>			