



# PREVENTION AND CORRECTION: OVERVIEW COURSE OUTLINE

Minimum time for completion of the course is 4.5 hours

## I. **Section 1: Educator Ethics Booster and Refresher:** Author, Troy Hutchings, Ed.D.

### I. **Objectives**

- A. Participants will gain a working knowledge of, and know the difference between, dispositions, conduct, and statutes.
- B. Participants will gain a working knowledge of, and know the difference between, employment, licensure, and criminal sanctions.
- C. Participants will gain a working knowledge of, and be able to implement, an ethical framework of decision-making.
- D. Participants will be able to identify systemic contributors that contribute to an ethical decision- making slippery slope.
- E. Participants will be able to identify reasons why educators become vulnerable to ethical violations and statutory violations.
- F. Participants will be able to identify and use tools for navigating through the competing tensions inherent in the teaching profession.
- G. Participants will be able to reflect on their own ethical teaching practice.

### II. **Introduction**

- A. Complexity of the profession
- B. Why Ethics?

### III. **Defining ethics**

- A. Differentiation between ethics, morality, and law
- B. Confusion within the profession
- C. Educators defer to the law

#### **IV. Challenges of being a teacher**

- A. Intense commitment to help children (dispositions)
- B. Lack of knowledge of the regulatory framework
- C. Lack of training in ethical decision-making
- D. Alone in making decisions
- E. The struggle for teachers between being a caring person with in loco parentis responsibilities, and a teacher who is tasked to uphold and follow rules in which they may feel do not apply to a given situation
- F. Public scrutiny of educators (from media reports to web sites, teacher behaviors are continually made public)

#### **V. Ethical equilibrium**

- A. Graphic of frameworks: dispositions, ethics, and law
- B. Case study: Teacher at music camp

#### **VI. Individual educator decision-making and the situational variables that impact decision-making**

- A. Green, yellow, red light decisions Challenge of variance
  - 1. Different implicit norms
  - 2. Shifting of school administration
  - 3. Life changes/pressures
- B. What is red for one educator, may be green for another
- C. Slope of decision-making (GONE)
  - 1. Gradualism...
  - 2. Objectivity can be lost
  - 3. Neutrality can be lost
  - 4. Erosion of boundaries may occur
- D. In actuality, the slippery slope is imperceptible

#### **VII. Systemic variables that contribute to slippery slope Socio-structural practices create risk conditions for educators**

- A. Inherent within profession
- B. School specific
- C. Socio-schooling milieu
- D. Blurring of boundaries between children and adults

*“Attempting to understand the situational and systemic contributions to an individual’s behavior does not excuse the person or absolve him responsibility in engaging, in immoral, illegal, or evil deeds” (Zimbardo)*

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## **SECTION 2: Cybertraps for Educators: Author, Fred Lane, J.D.**

### **I. Introduction and Course Objectives**

- A. Familiarize Teachers with New and Emerging Technologies
- B. Educate Teachers about Risks of Misconduct Arising out of the Use and Misuse of Digital Devices
- C. Provide Teachers with Strategies to Avoid Misconduct in the Future

### **II. Review of New and Emerging Technologies**

- A. Overview of Impact of Technology on Teaching
- B. Examples of Technology-Related Misconduct by Teachers
- C. Review of New and Emerging Technologies

### **III. Educator Cybertraps**

- A. Professional Misconduct
  - 1. Cyberloafing / Lack of Productivity
  - 2. Inappropriate or Hostile Communications with Others
  - 3. Inappropriate, Threatening, or Disturbing Online Activity
  - 4. Creation of a Hostile Work Environment
  - 5. Immoral Online Activity (Intentional and Unintentional)
  - 6. Inappropriate Interaction with Students (non-criminal)
- B. Criminal Activity
  - 1. Cyberbullying, Cyberharassment, and Cyberstalking
  - 2. Mishandling of Student Sexts
  - 3. Obstruction of Justice
  - 4. Voyeurism and Invasion of Privacy
  - 5. Solicitation, Sexting, and Sexual Assault

### **IV. Strategies and Precautions**

- A. Reflection and Conscious Action
- B. The Importance of a Digital Self-Audit
- C. Choose "Friends" Carefully
- D. Students Are Not Your "Friends"
- E. Practice Transparency
- F. When in Doubt, Don't
- G. Understand Technology Before You Use It

### **V. Conclusion / Review**

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**Section 3: Educator Relationships and Boundaries:** Author, Glen Lipson, Ph.D.

**I. Definition of Learning Objectives**

- A. To recognize and preserve the value of the teacher-student or teacher-child relationships while recognizing the opportunities provided by the learning environment and acknowledging the potential pitfalls.
- B. To recognize and enhance the importance of the instructional alliance.

**II. The Complexity of Relationships in Schools**

- A. Relationships are an important conduit for learning, the acquisition of skills, and the absorption of knowledge.
- B. Many of the rewards inherent in education arise out of the teacher-student alliance.
- C. The many different roles filled by a teacher during the course of a day may complementary or contradictory.
- D. Students and/or children in the school environment may have significant unmet needs or personal difficulties that affect a teacher's ability to perform his or her job.
- E. Training in the dynamics of relationships and ethical principles helps teachers better understand the risks in the teacher-student alliance and affirms safe practices.

**III. Vulnerabilities in Caring and Sharing**

- A. Educational communities expect teachers to be accessible by their students.
- B. Digital and cyber conversations exacerbate the risks of inappropriate interactions
- C. Efforts to pull away increase the potential for misunderstanding and emotional harm.

**IV. Educator Risk Factors**

- A. A teacher's personal experience growing up may make him or her more vulnerable to over-identifying or over-empathizing with a student.
- B. A teacher may also be facing issues in his or her current situation that will increase his or her vulnerability to an inappropriate connection with a student.
- C. Some teachers may be vulnerable to manipulation by a student.
- D. Other teachers are vulnerable to infatuation or love-sickness with students.

**V. Student Risk Factors**

- A. A student's desire, consciously or unconsciously, to replicate traumatic experiences.

- B. A student's need to feel secure.
- C. The potential for a student to misconstrue interest as affection.
- D. The potential for putting a teacher on a pedestal due to family dynamics or systems issues.

**VI. Prevention and Resiliency**

- A. Teachers need to take steps to understand vulnerabilities and the potential for students to exploit them.
- B. Teachers need to exercise self-care to help cope with a stressful (but hopefully rewarding) profession.
- C. Teachers need to have the confidence to listen to their intuition (i.e., embrace the gift of fear).
- D. Teachers need to work on these issues as an educational community, and within the context of the broader general community.
- E. Teachers need to pay attention to the issue of life balance.

**VII. Conclusion**

- A. Everyone, including teachers and students, learn about themselves through relationships.
- B. The teaching profession has unique opportunities to make a difference in the life of a student.
- C. A teacher's vulnerabilities may intersect with pathology or needs of others and result in harm to a student or to the teacher (or both).
- D. Each member of the educational community has an obligation to pay attention to relationships, to be aware of potential problems, to work as a community, and to recognize in themselves and others when too much is simply too much. Doing so will help provide safety for all.
- E. Ethics and policies can and should be utilized as tools to mark the limits of what teachers are allowed to do as a member of an educational commu