POLICY ON DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Mersey Counselling and Therapy Centre (MCTC) adheres to the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy in all its work.

This policy addresses all dual relationships relating to MCTC clients within the Centre.

A client is defined as anyone attending MCTC as:
- an individual client
- a couple
- a group member
- a trainee
- a supervisee
- a workshop participant

The BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy states that,
'A dual relationship arises when a practitioner has two or more kinds of relationship concurrently with a client, for example client and trainee, acquaintance and client, colleague and supervisee.’

MCTC acknowledges that dual relationships are a fact of life generally, that they are more likely to occur within a relatively small profession such as counselling and even more likely to arise within any small organisation such as MCTC.

Examples of dual relationships that might arise within MCTC would be:
- A volunteer attending a workshop delivered by an MCTC therapist
- An MCTC therapist attending training or a workshop delivered by the Director
- Clients attending workshops delivered by their therapist
- Clients attending MCTC events at which therapist and volunteers might also be present

This is not an exhaustive list and it should be noted that therapists, volunteers and others may become clients by, for instance, attending a workshop delivered by an(other) MCTC therapist.

The BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in counselling and Psychotherapy further states that,
'The existence of a dual relationship with a client is seldom neutral and can have a powerful beneficial or detrimental impact that may
not always be easily foreseeable. For these reasons practitioners are required to consider the implications of entering into dual relationships with clients, to avoid entering into relationships that are likely to be detrimental to clients, and to be readily accountable to clients and colleagues for any dual relationships that occur.'

MCTC recognises that each dual relationship is unique to the people involved and to the circumstances at a particular time and place. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each MCTC therapist to give very careful consideration to any possible dual relationship with a client (as defined above) as it arises, and to the possible consequences. The issue should be discussed in clinical supervision and perhaps with other therapists in order that therapists are able to satisfy themselves and justify to others, that they have thoroughly considered the implications and believe that the dual relationship would, at least, not be detrimental to and would, ideally, benefit the client.