Places for Struggling Teens™

"It is more important to get it right, than to get it first."

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WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

By: Lon Woodbury



This will be the first issue of this newsletter that has a specific theme. However, the topic of what is workable and ethical in our practice in relationships between referring consultants and schools and programs has been receiving considerable attention over the last few years, so deserves expanded treatment.

We hope to encourage a full discussion of ethics in our industry, and are starting with several statements from within the industry of private parent-choice schools and programs and those professionals who work with these schools and programs. I encourage those who want to add their comments to please send them on to us. We will at least put them on line, and space allowing, in the print edition as well.

In any professional relationship, there is always the question of where to draw the line in what is appropriate and what is inappropriate in regard to professional relationships. The extreme on one side would have referring consultants with almost no contact with schools and programs outside making specific referrals. This could be because almost any other contact could be perceived as potentially a conflict of interest. Even a personal friendship between a consultant and a school or program staff could be plausibly claimed that a referral to that school or program could be based on personal friendship instead of what is best for the child and family. This extreme perspective would be unworkable because the consultant would be working in a vacuum with no or little knowledge of schools and programs outside of formal written materials and reports.

The other extreme could be called "anything goes." Nothing is inappropriate if it brings in business. This could be paying money for each referral that enrolls, making promises to parents that the program or consultant cannot keep, referring to a program the consultant has an undisclosed financial interest in, schools or

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