

Sexual Abuse by Doctors

The BC college of physicians and Surgeons has now set up two confidential telephone lines for people wanting to report inappropriate behaviour by doctors as follows:

Local and Lower Mainland 739-0374
Outside Lower Mainland 1-800-661-9701

Callers can leave a message stating name or pseudonym, telephone number and a time when they can be reached.

Also can report directly to the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons Registrar's Office at 733-7758.

Another resource is the Therapist Abuse Action Group (TARG) which offers advocacy, support around abuse by therapists.

Contact **Dr. Sue Penfold** at 875-2614

Warning Signs of Possible Sexual Misconduct by Psychotherapists*

- (1) The therapist talks about his own personal problems.
- (2) The therapist brings up sex out of context.
- (3) The therapist emphasizes discussion of sex in sessions.
- (4) The therapist criticizes the way the patient deals with sex (not constructive criticism or a therapeutic intervention).
- (5) The therapist asks the patient to come in at odd hours.
- (6) The therapist asks the patient to meet at his home or her home, or another unusual place.
- (7) The therapist suggests or states that sex is the solution to her problems.
- (8) The therapist indicates that the patient will have to form a close personal relationship with him as part of her treatment.
- (9) The therapist tells the patient how to behave and what to do in day-to-day life.
- (10) The therapist sets himself up as the expert who has all of the answers.
- (11) The therapist encourages dependence on him, coupled with urging that the patient separate herself from close friends and family.
- (12) The therapist criticizes assertive behavior by the patient.
- (13) The therapist emphasizes touching within the therapeutic relationship, insists it's necessary for improvement, makes it a central part of the therapy.
- (14) The therapist provides alcohol or other drugs for use by the patient and himself during therapy sessions or other meetings.
- (15) The patient has a gut feeling that something is really not right, in which case she should:
 - trust her gut feeling
 - tell a supportive friend or family member of the feelings/suspensions, and get feedback for support
 - consider changing therapists
 - consider discussing her concerns with, e.g., the Sexual Assault Treatment Centre, the appropriate professional association, the appropriate licensing board, the Sensitive Crimes Unit of the District Attorney's office etc.
 - know that she can bring a friend to therapy sessions, whether the friend sits in on the session or waits in the waiting room.
- (16) The therapist gives the patient gifts, especially if expensive.
- (17) The therapist writes personal letters to the patient.
- (18) The therapist stops charging for therapy sessions (unless clearly explained as being because of the patient's need for continued therapy while she is clearly unable to pay even a small amount for it).

*Note: No single point or even few points are guarantees that sexual misconduct is occurring -- but the more positive indicators, the more likely that something questionable or inappropriate occurring, and the therapist's behavior should be called into question.