



Alabama State Department of Education

Educator Ethics Module 3



Purpose

Explore the responsibility of educators in identifying and reporting inappropriate behaviors.





Stimulating Thinking

What is my role in reporting inappropriate behavior?





Participants will



- identify lack-of-judgment decisions;
- identify responsibilities for reporting educator misconduct; and
- review and discuss district reporting policies that ensure a safe and ethical climate.



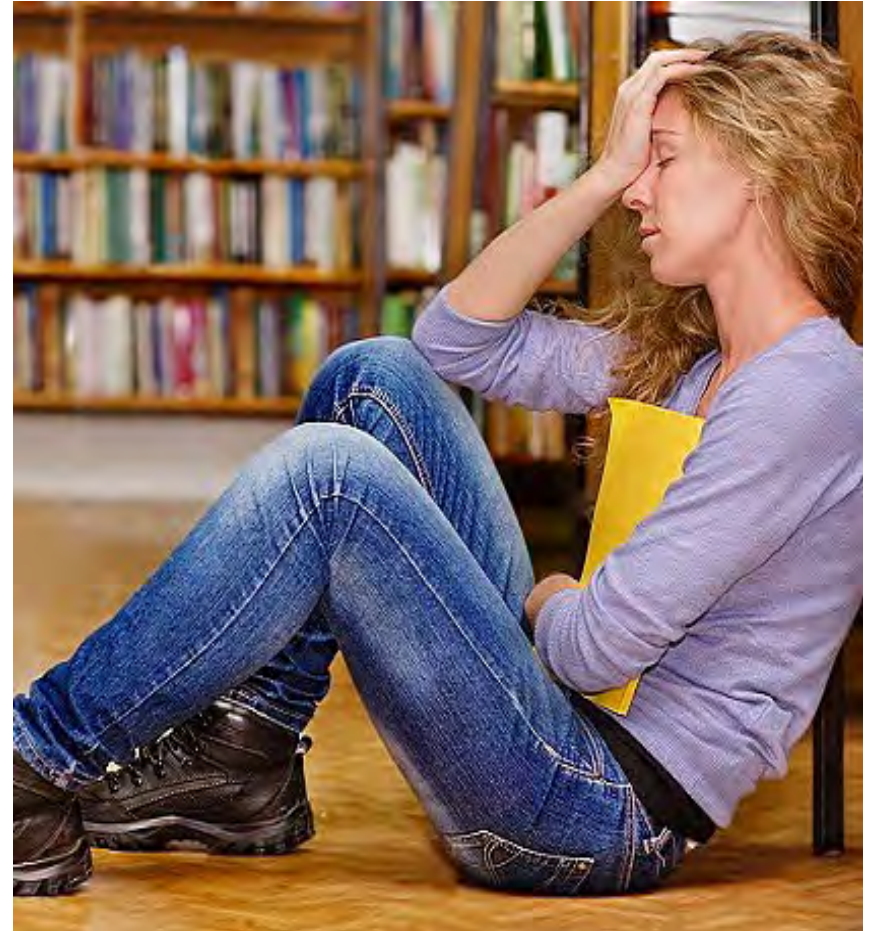
Caring and Committed Educators





Inappropriate Behavior

How often do we read or see news stories about a teacher who has had an inappropriate relationship with a student?



“A 14-year-old student wrote his cell number on a classroom chalkboard because he wanted a classmate he liked to call him. The student was contacted—not by the girl, but by his 32-year-old teacher. Within days, the two were involved in a sexual relationship.”



“A 33-year-old teacher began flirting with a 17-year-old student at a school dance. The teacher then sent the student texts, photos, and a video of herself performing lewd acts. The relationship escalated. The teacher pleaded guilty to sexual assault.”





“A 54-year-old teacher exchanged more than 1,800 text messages with a student, many of them sexually explicit, before the teacher was convicted and sentenced to prison.”





Tabletalk

Could the previous incidents have been prevented? If so, how?

What strategies could these districts/campuses have implemented to prevent them from happening?



Impact of Educator Misconduct



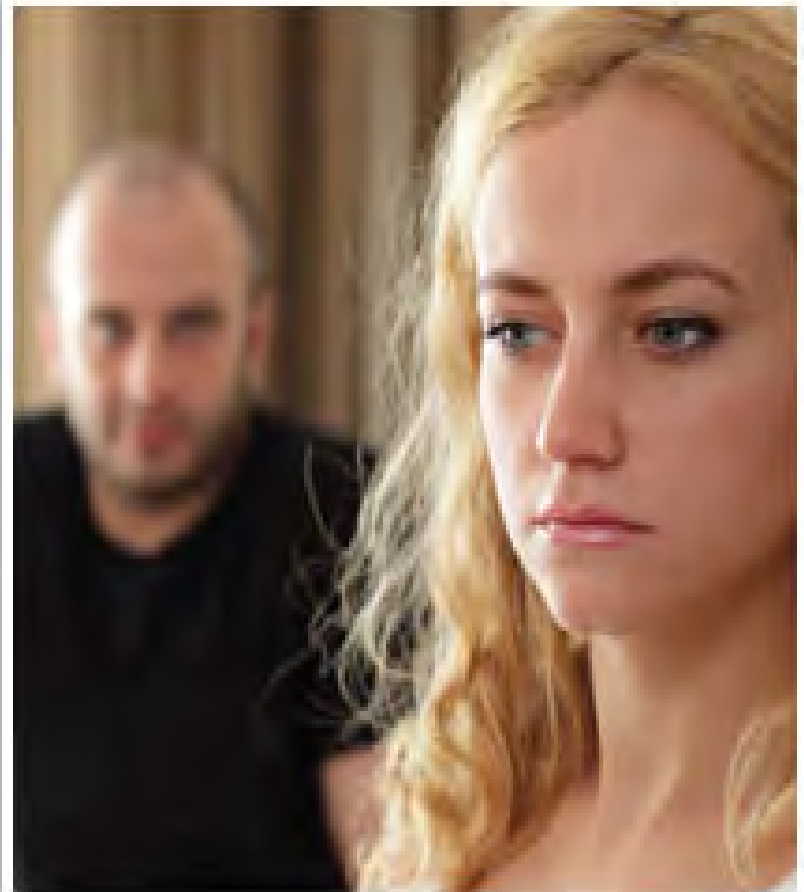


Alabama teachers charged with sexual relationships with students

2015-16 school year



**What does
borderline
behavior
mean?**





Video Scenario



Video Scenario Debrief





Keep me safe.



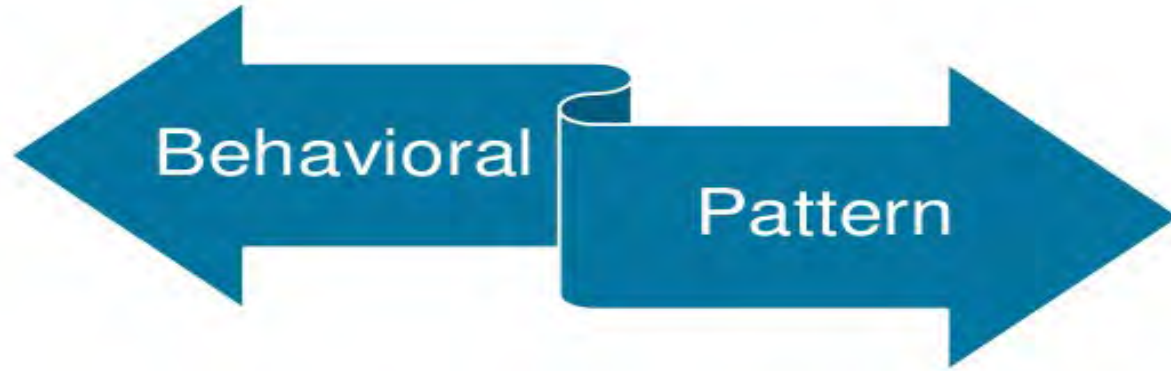


A Common Occurrence

“When I talk to teachers in a school where an educator has been arrested, I hear admissions that they suspected something but, because they were not completely sure, did not want to say anything.”

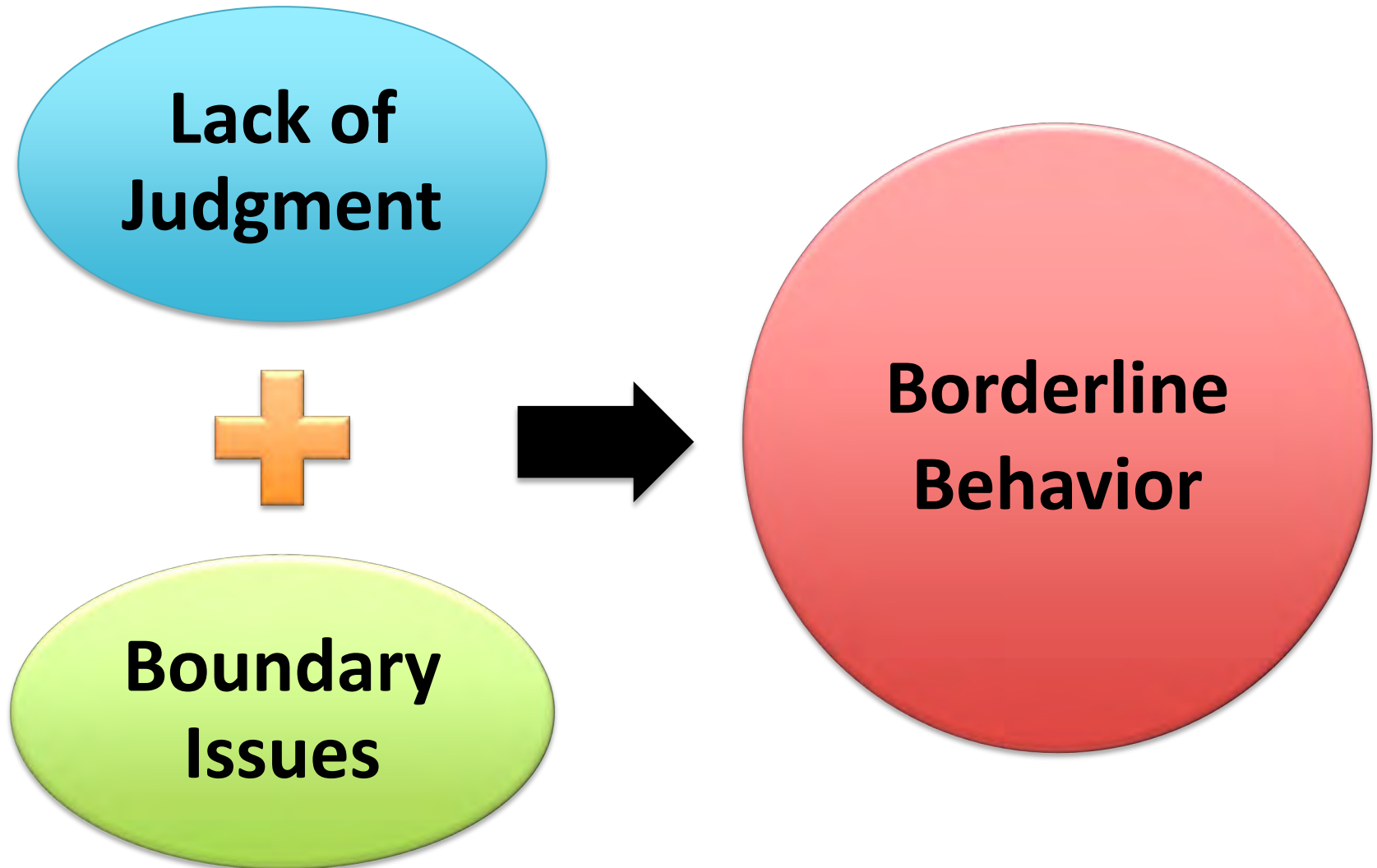
(Shakeshaft, 2013)





Educators can confront misconduct, specifically sexual misconduct, in schools if they know how to recognize and respond to suspicious patterns.

(Shakeshaft, 2013)





Lack-of-Judgment Pattern



- Don't initially set out to harm students
- End up in relationships with students to meet emotional needs



The Slippery Slope

Voluntary statement given during investigation:

“Why did I act this way? I honestly don’t know. I think it had a lot to do with two things: extreme loneliness and severe depression.”

“Basically, I have no friends, certainly none in this town. This is probably the reason I’m so depressed. I started to feel closeness with her and was drawn to it. I don’t know what I was thinking.”





Reporting is Everyone's Responsibility

"I typically remain in my classroom until 5:30 or 6 most afternoons to grade papers, gather lesson resources, etc.

Walking to my car, I frequently observed a teacher leaning against her car engaged in conversation with one of my eighth-grade students. I often left feeling uneasy. It didn't appear appropriate for this teacher to be chatting with the student in this manner. Their proximity seemed flirtatious. Usually, there were only two cars left in the parking lot: mine and hers.

Two months later, the teacher was suspended for having an inappropriate relationship with the student. Ultimately, she lost her job, and the student transferred to another school. I should have reported what I had observed to my principal. Now it's too late."



**What
would
YOU
Do**



feedback

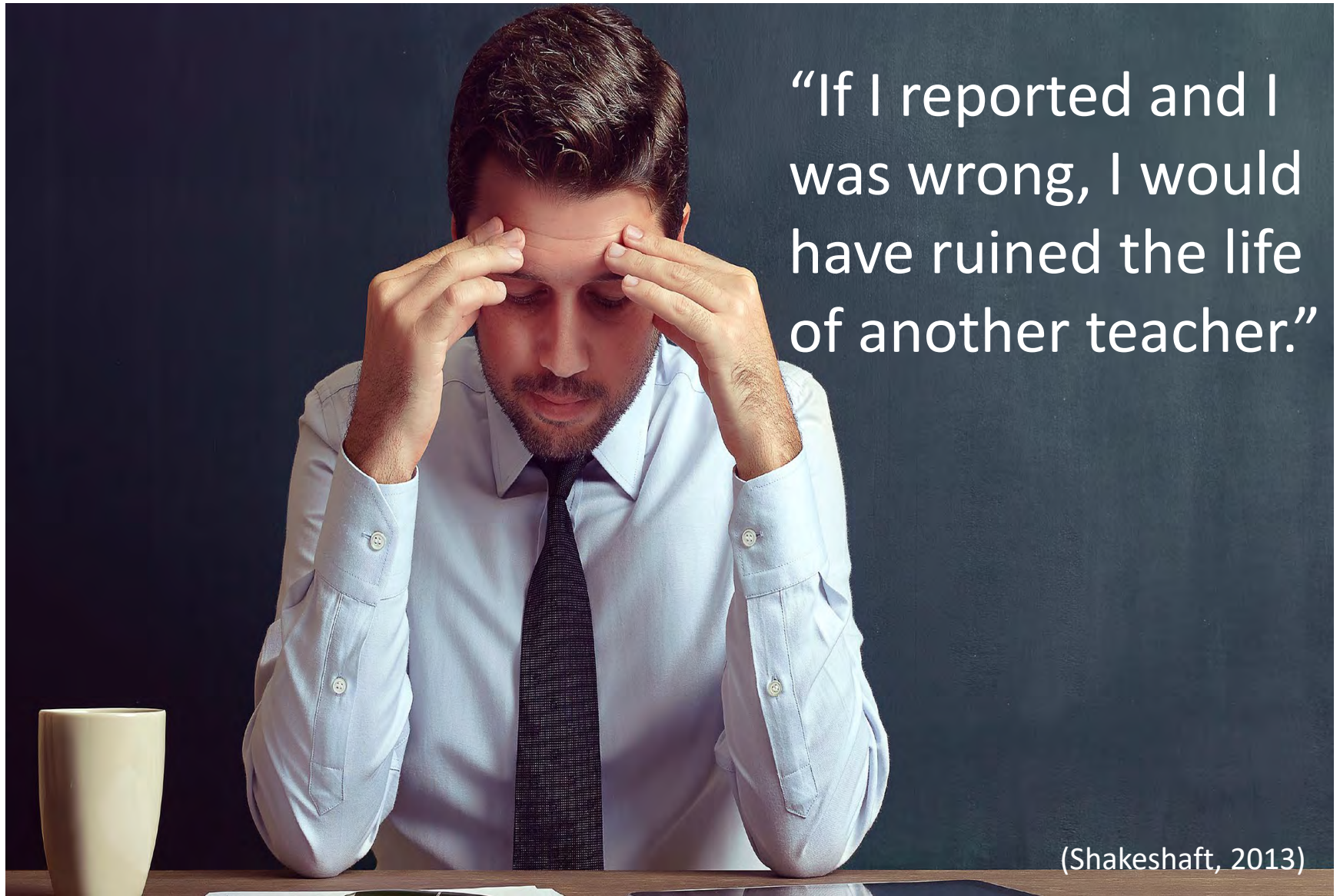


Professional Responsibility



Many students become victims of some type of educator misconduct.



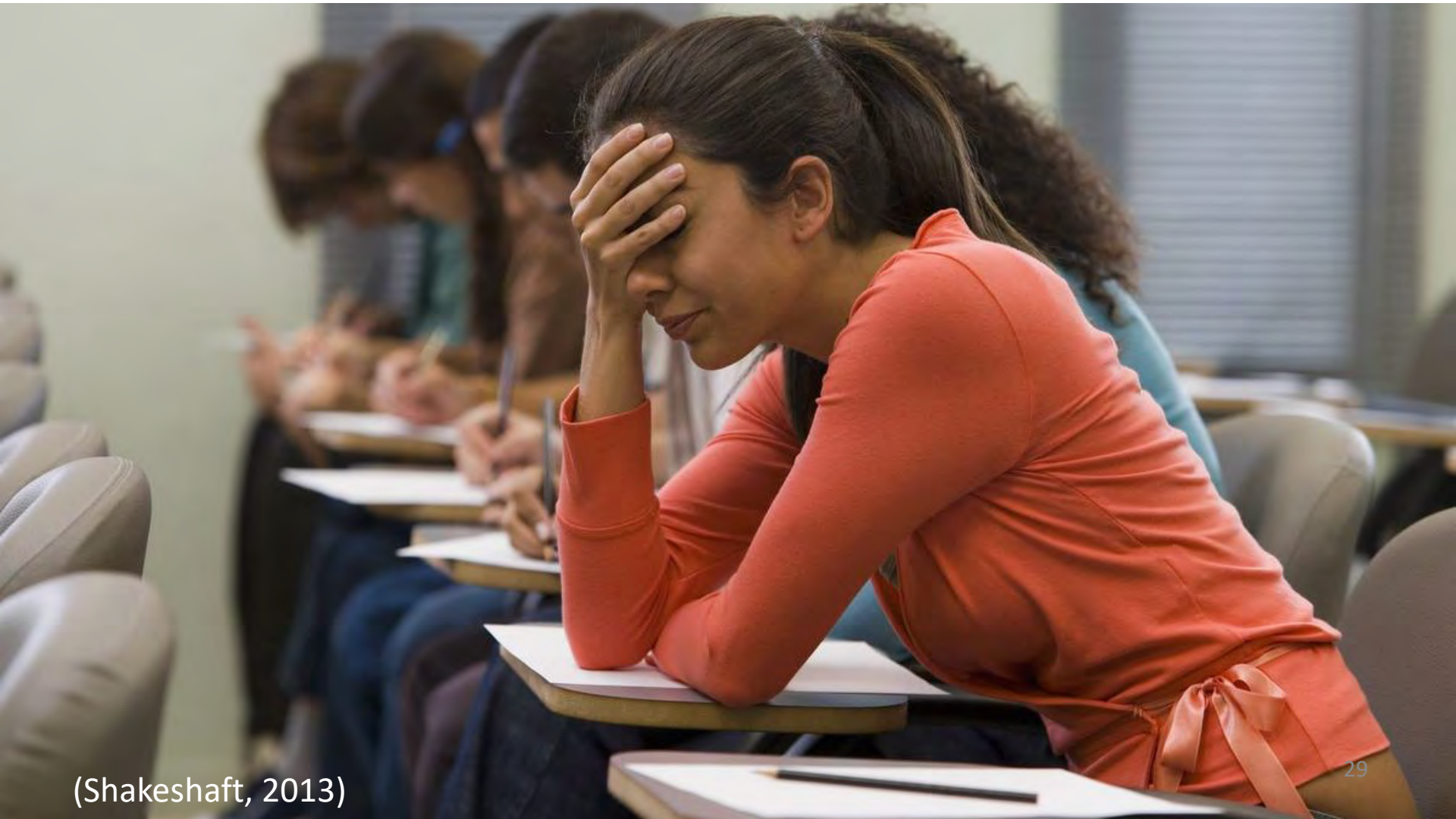


“If I reported and I was wrong, I would have ruined the life of another teacher.”

(Shakeshaft, 2013)



“If I didn’t report and this person had abused, I’d have ruined the life of a student.”





Question to Ponder

Why do cases of educator misconduct go unreported?





Findings

Reasons some educators give for not reporting suspected educator misconduct:

- Lack of recognition of characteristics associated with inappropriate/abusive behavior
- Lack of awareness of legal responsibilities
- Fear of negatively affecting the school or educator's job



Findings

Reasons some educators give for not reporting suspected educator misconduct:

- Lack of sufficient evidence
- Belief that the student will be harmed more than helped if reported
- Fear of retaliation and litigation



**How do I distinguish
between what is and
isn't a reportable
offense?**





If you suspect or know something . . .





What do we need to know about the reporting process?





What is Child Abuse?

- harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare
- non-accidental physical or mental injury
- sexual abuse or exploitation (including attempted abuse)





What is child neglect?

- negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child
- the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, clothing, or shelter





Mandatory Reporting



Mandatory Reporting

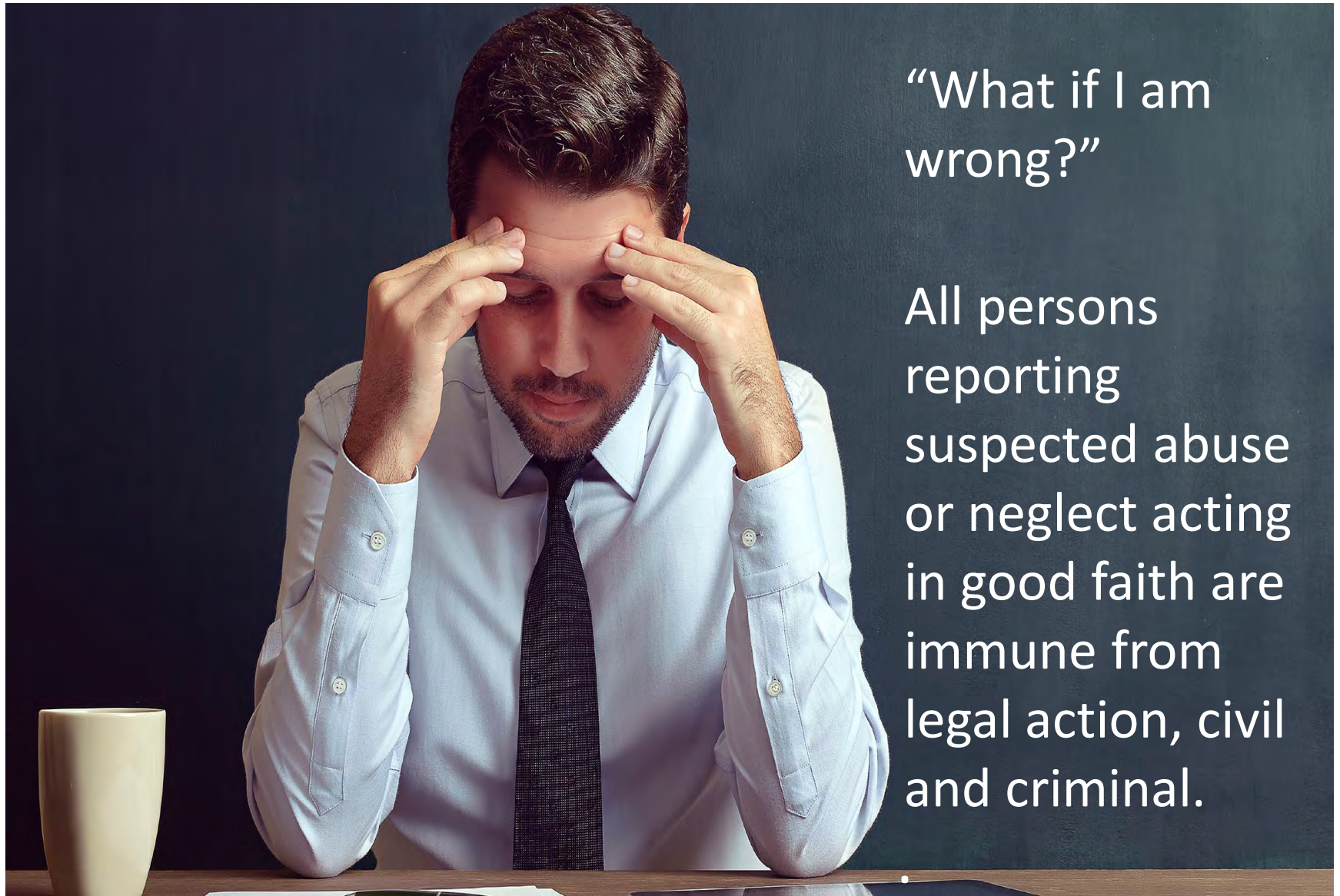


Mandatory Reporting





**You as a
mandatory
reporter are
responsible!**



“What if I am wrong?”

All persons reporting suspected abuse or neglect acting in good faith are immune from legal action, civil and criminal.



If you don't report you could be charged and convicted of a misdemeanor and sentenced to a maximum of six months' imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.00.



A public or private employer who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect may be charged and convicted of a Class C misdemeanor.

OUTCOMES

- ✓ Become knowledgeable about the importance of reporting requirements.
- ✓ Create a safe and ethical climate.
- ✓ Send a strong message that misconduct will not be tolerated.
- ✓ Trust your instincts





**PREVENTION
WORKS!**



Prevention Practices

District/Campus

Practice: **Implement Policies and Practices**



Teacher/Staff

- Familiarize yourself with all policies and practices.
- Know all district/campus expectations.



- **Practice**

- Familiarize yourself with all policies/practices.
- Receive training.
- Be transparent, be open, and communicate.
- Beware of bias.
- Pay attention.
- Educate parents/students.



EVERYONE'S Responsibility

**IF YOU SEE
SOMETHING,
SAY SOMETHING.**



PERFORMANCE TASK



Reflection





ANY
QUESTIONS
?



References

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