

This issue in this scenario with the new school counselor, Jack, is that he did not properly address the potential harm that could come of this group intervention. Once harm came of the group, with Carol feeling unsafe given the harassment she was enduring, Jack also failed to address this. I believe the issue first arose with deciding to do a mixed gender intervention group. Often, separating the genders allows for less conflict and group misuse. When working with groups that are mixed gendered, it is important to remember that confidentiality and group expectations are explicitly explained and enforced. It appears Jack failed to address the group commitment to treating one another with dignity and respect, which in doing so set the tone for members to mistreat one another. Even though these sexual remarks are technically made outside of the group time, it is still Jack's responsibility as the school counselor and group facilitator to address them to assure Carol's safety and well-being. This is a major violation of trust and a failure to protect the student's overall sense of well-being and it puts Carol at risk.

In section A.1.j of the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors model, it states that school counselors are to advocate for equitable treatment of students that is free of bias or oppression. In this case with Carol, she was feeling oppressed by another student's sexual comments and when this went unaddressed, Jack violated this obligation to the student's safety and well-being (ASCA, 2022). Now that Carol has dropped out of the group, this also interferes with confidentiality as she could choose to share what was learned of her peers in this group. Because Carol did not receive the proper group termination from the school counselor, this violates section A.9.e of the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors. In section A.9.e it clearly states that school counselors must report to administration any perceived threat to another person's mental and physical well-being. In this case, Carol felt threatened by the sexual

comments being made by another group member, and the school counselor failed to report this (ASCA, 2022).

As a school counselor, I believe the best course of action to take would be to report the lapse in judgement made. Ensuring the student's safety and mental well-being is of the utmost importance, so making sure that the perceived threat that the student experienced is reported and taken care of is the first step in reconciliation of wrongs. Accepting any repercussions or punishments because of this lapse in judgement will need to be addressed properly and timely. The use of this experience to learn from in the future, if allowed to continue with a school counseling practice, would be wise. Learning from our mistakes and making better choices in the future to best support our students that we serve is all that we can hope for moving forward.

References

ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors. (2022).

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/44f30280-ffe8-4b41-9ad8-f15909c3d164/EthicalStandards.pdf>