**Case Study for Chapter 14: The Changing Workplace**

Cole is a client in an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) located in a large pharmaceutical corporation. He decided to seek help for a variety of issues ranging from a recent divorce and to anxiety and panic attacks.

Cole, who is a “techie,” asked his social work counselor to facilitate a live web-based therapeutic group where he and other clients would be represented by computer graphics (avatars). With a focus on health and wellness in the workplace, the clients stated that ideally their advocacy effort would result in individual and organizational change that fosters a balanced lifestyle.

Cole is intrigued by the idea of a web-based intervention, but the social worker has some concerns related to:

* conducting counseling without ever meeting people in person.
* ethical questions about privacy and confidentiality.
* establishing a professional relationship through computer graphics.
* effective management of the network.
* how live web-based services fit in the organizational culture of a large pharmaceutical corporation.
* the pathway for advocacy efforts to result in change within the corporation.

1) Do you think it would be advisable for a social worker to proceed with a web-based therapeutic group like the one sought by Cole? Why or why not?

2) In an area like computer technology where social workers may not have much expertise, how can they proceed? Confidentiality of personal information can be very tricky online. What potential consequences could occur if there were a data breach of some kind?

3) Is a social worker able to adequately assess people without physically seeing or hearing them? Explain your thoughts.