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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION
EXAMINING BOARD OF SOCIAL WORKERS
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST:

JOANNE R SUCKOW, CAPSW,
RESPONDENT

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
LS0110252SOC

The parties to this action for the purposes of § 227.53, Stats., are:

Joanne R. Suckow, CAPSW
5810 N. 37th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53209

Social Worker Section
Examining Board of Social Workers,
Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors
PO Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Department of Regulation and Licensing
Division of Enforcement
PO Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final decision in this matter, subject to the approval of the Social Worker Section. The Section has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Section in this matter adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Joanne R. Suckow, Respondent, date of birth February 18, 1947, is certified by the Social Worker Section as an advanced practice social worker in the State of Wisconsin pursuant to certificate number 232, which was first granted November 5, 1993.
2. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is 5810 N. 37th Street, Milwaukee, WI, 53209.
3. On March 12, 1999, Respondent was employed as a social worker at Audubon Health Care Center ("Audubon"), a nursing home in Bayside, Wisconsin.

4. A group of four staff members were talking with Respondent at the nurses' station on a unit at Audubon about the new smoking procedures which had become effective the previous day. While the discussion was taking place, the staff members were approached by Ms. A, a 61-year-old resident who was being treated with psychotropic medication, including antidepressants (Paxil®), antipsychotic medications (Haldol®), and antianxiety medications (Ativan®).

5. Ms. A began "whining" and demanded a cigarette as a reward for having taken a bath. Respondent told Ms. A that no cigarette had been promised to her in exchange for taking a bath. Respondent tried to listen to both conversations at the same time. Ms. A continued to whine loudly and the staff were shouting over Ms. A to make themselves heard by Respondent.

6. Respondent, with an angry facial expression, held her hand up directly in front of Ms. A's face, and several times loudly told Ms. A to be quiet.

7. Ms. A continued her behavior. Respondent, who was holding a pair of pants, turned to Ms. A and told her to "stuff these pants in your mouth."

8. Respondent told Ms. A that Ms. A should go downstairs and she would be called when the new month's shipment of cigarettes, which were due in that day, were available. Respondent took Ms. A by the shoulders, moved her away from the desk, and in an upset tone of voice, told Ms. A to leave. Ms. A went down the stairs and Respondent went over to deactivate the door alarm.

9. A month earlier, on February 10, 1998, Respondent had re-written Ms. A's "Care Plan Mood State / Sad or Anxious" for Ms. A's annual evaluation using pre-worded choices put in from computer MDS format.

10. The "Approaches" Respondent selected to include in Ms. A's Care Plan included:

- Provide quiet calm environment when anxious.
- Explain procedures & reasons for specific care prior to doing them.
- Include resident in decisions related to care.
- Channel energy through activities: smoking / socializing with peers.
- Intervene during anxious behavior. Stay with resident as much as possible, redirect focus of attention during periods of anxiety, assist to identify source of anxiety, assist to identify alternatives to relieve anxious behavior and decrease noise in the environment at stressful times.

11. Respondent did not use the appropriate approaches in managing Ms. A's behavior during the March 12, 1999 incident.

12. § 50.09(1)(e), Stats., provided:

"Every resident in a nursing home or community-based residential facility shall . . . have the right to [b]e treated with courtesy, respect and full recognition of the resident's dignity and individuality, by all employe[e]s of the facility and licensed, certified or registered providers of health care and pharmacists with whom the resident comes in contact."

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Examining Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to § 457.26(2), Stats.

2. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Examining Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors has authority to enter into this stipulated resolution pursuant to § 227.44(5), Stats.

3. Respondent by violating § 50.09(1)(e), Stats., a law the circumstances of which substantially relate to the practice of social work, has committed unprofessional conduct, as defined by § SFC 20.02(2), Wis. Adm. Code, and is subject to discipline pursuant to § 457.26(2)(f), Stats.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. That Joanne R. Suckow, CAPSW, is REPRIMANDED for the conduct set out above.

2. Respondent shall, within one hundred twenty (120) days of the date of this order, take and complete a day long course or courses on the subject of anger management, which course(s) shall first be approved by the Section or its designee. Respondent shall, within 30 days of completion of such course or courses, provide evidence of compliance with this paragraph to the Department Monitor.

3. Respondent is prohibited from applying any of the hours completed to satisfy the terms of this order toward

satisfaction of the continuing education required during the July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2003 registration biennium.

4. If Respondent is unable to take or complete the course or courses required by the preceding paragraph within 120 days because of illness or other circumstances acceptable to the Section or its designee, Respondent shall, within six months of the date of this order, take and complete the required course or courses, which shall first be approved by the Section or its designee. Respondent shall, within 30 days of completion of such course or courses, provide evidence of compliance with this paragraph to the Department Monitor.

5. Requests for approval of educational programs and notification of completion of educational programs shall be mailed, faxed or delivered to:

Department Monitor

Department of Regulation And Licensing

Division of Enforcement

1400 East Washington Ave.

P.O. Box 8935

Madison, WI 53708-8935

Fax: (608) 266-2264

6. Violation of any term or condition of this Order may constitute grounds for revocation of Respondent's certificate as an advanced practice social worker in Wisconsin. Should the Section determine that there is probable cause to believe that Respondent has violated the terms of this Order, the Section may order that Respondent's certificate be summarily suspended pending investigation of and hearing on the alleged violation.

The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the Board for rehearing and to petition for judicial review are set forth on the attached "Notice of Appeal Information".

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin this 25th day of October, 2001.

Cornelia Gordon-Hempe

Chairperson

Social Worker Section