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BEFORE THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR SECTION
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING
AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY :
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST :
 : LS0306256CPC
PATRICIA A. PETERSON-BILOTTO, L.P.C., :
RESPONDENT. :

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

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

Patricia A. Peterson-Bilotto, L.P.C.
2592 E. River Drive
Green Bay, WI 54301

Professional Counselor Section
Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling
and Social Work Examining Board
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Department of Regulation and Licensing
Division of Enforcement
P.O. 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 Professional Counselor 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. Patricia A. Peterson-Bilotto, L.P.C., Respondent, date of birth November 9, 1955, is licensed by the Professional Counselor Section as a professional counselor in the state of Wisconsin pursuant to license number 848, which was first granted November 4, 1993. (Prior to a statutory change effective 11/01/02, Respondent's credential was a certificate as a professional counselor.)

2. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is 2592 E. River Drive, Green Bay, WI 54301.

3. From December 1, 1986 to September 8, 1989, Respondent was employed as a psychotherapist at Family Service Association of Brown County in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

4. While at Family Service Association of Brown County, Respondent met Ms. A in 1987 when Respondent provided family counseling to Ms. A and her two daughters, who were then 9 and 10 years old. The younger of the daughters had been sexually abused by a family friend and there were visitation issues because the father of the girls had moved back to the area after living in Colorado. Ms. A's ongoing use of cocaine became an issue in her daughters' treatment and Ms. A agreed to begin individual psychotherapy with Respondent.

5. From March 8, 1988 to September 5, 1989, Respondent provided psychotherapy to Ms. A at Family Service Association of Brown County.

a) During that 18 month period, Respondent provided treatment to Ms. A on 79 occasions.

b) Respondent's diagnostic impression at the first session was unspecified personality disorder and cocaine dependence.

c) Treatment related primarily to Ms. A's use of cocaine, speed, marijuana, prescription drugs and alcohol. The treatment focus was on withdrawing from chemical dependency and staying "straight" with minimal relapse.

d) At the beginning of treatment, Ms. A reported having been physically and emotionally abused by her father, but did not report sexual abuse.

e) A treatment note of July 19, 1988 says: "[Ms. A] is having flashbacks - going into self hypnosis alot. Says she doesn't want to remember bad things dad did ect. But she did tell of a flashback she had in session & we re-parented her 4 y.o." The note then described her father having made fun of her in front of friends.

f) On January 5, 1989, for the first time, Ms. A said she remembered bits and pieces of her father sexually abusing her.

g) Respondent hypnotized Ms. A for the first time on July 31, 1989.

h) On August 1, 1989, Respondent had Ms. A view the video "Breaking Silence." Respondent also hypnotized Ms. A and noted that she was easily hypnotized and that Ms. A's father was in her subconscious.

i) At the last session on September 5, 1989, Ms. A "went back to memories." The progress note says Ms. A "remembered why she holds in" and then describes her father on top of Ms. A with his penis in his hand.

j) Ms. A had been cocaine free for a year and her diagnosis at the time treatment ended there was borderline personality disorder.

6. Ms. A's two daughters were included in a few of the sessions as part of the treatment Respondent provided to Ms. A at Family Service Association of Brown County in 1988-89.

7. In September 1989, Respondent moved to independent practice at Family, Life and Growth Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin. From September 20, 1989 until March 18, 1992, Respondent provided psychotherapy to Ms. A at that outpatient facility.

a) During that 2½ year period, Respondent provided treatment to Ms. A approximately once a week.

b) Respondent initially diagnosed Ms. A as Borderline Personality Disorder, and listed that as the diagnoses on client progress reviews of December 5, 1989 and February 27, 1990. Ms. A was engaging in self mutilation by cutting herself.

c) Prior to beginning treatment with Respondent, Ms. A had never had an inpatient admission for mental health issues. Ms. A was hospitalized at St. Vincent's Hospital December 16 – 21, 1989 for depression and suicidality. She was discharged against medical advice with the diagnoses of Major depression, single episode; dysthymia and substance abuse, multiple, by history.

d) On April 10, 1990, Respondent noted audio-taping and that Ms. A had disclosed sexual abuse by her father and that anger came out when they did audio-taping regarding the abuse.

e) Prior to April 24, 1990, the records do not contain any mention of the possibility that Ms. A might have "alters" and suffer from Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD). [Respondent contends that Ms. A had made statements prior to that date that led Respondent to question whether Ms. A might be MPD, but agrees the records do not reflect those statements or Respondent's thoughts on that matter.] Then, the note of April 24, 1990 reports that Respondent confronted Ms. A's avoidance and she "finally shared different personalities. no names – feels them. 14 males."

f) On subsequent client progress reviews, Respondent listed Ms. A's diagnoses as: MPD – Borderline on 5/22/90; MPD on 8/28/90; MPD on 11/20/90.

g) A note of May 22, 1990 indicates that Ms. A had read a book about MPD and seen a movie about MPD. The June 14, 1990 note says Ms. A brought in "When Rabbit Howls," a book on MPD, and had "highlighted those parts reminiscent of her."

h) Ms. A began revealing more and more alters in treatment sessions.

i) Notes began noting that Ms. A was reporting "missing time" and "not being there" in reference to what were alleged dissociative states.

j) Ms. A was hospitalized at St. Vincent's Hospital for mental health issues again on December 14, 1990.

k) On February 26, 1991, Ms. A gave a "ball park" figure of 50 to 100 alters or personalities.

l) Ms. A was hospitalized at Brown County Mental Health Center for mental health issues on August 18 - 27, 1991.

m) Although it is not mentioned in the records kept by Respondent, she now contends that during that therapy, different alters began disclosing:

- Their involvement in satanic rituals with their father and others which involved sexual abuse, murder, sacrifices, demonic attack and torture.
- That they were made to kill others and be sexual with them.
- Enjoyed the blood and cut themselves so they could drink the blood as they did in the rituals.

n) The last two treatment notes are on March 10 and 18, 1992. The notes discuss Ms. A switching alters while in the office. It appears that Ms. A is not doing well. There is no indication that treatment goals have been reached or that treatment will end.

o) The next record is a closing statement of May 19, 1992. It has "Doing well" as the reason for discharge. Staffing notes say: "Doing better. Seems to have integrated the alters well. Not showing any self abusive behaviors. Working on other issues at DSS."

8. Following their therapeutic relationship, Respondent and Ms. A commenced a personal relationship. They had their first romantic physical contact on July 4, 1992 and began a sexual relationship on July 6, 1992, which continued until June 2001.

9. By entering into a sexual relationship with a patient with Ms. A's history, condition and intensity of treatment within four months of the termination of therapy, Respondent engaged in conduct while practicing professional counseling which evidences a lack of knowledge or ability to apply professional principles or skills.

10. At the time Respondent began her sexual relationship with Ms. A, § 895.70, Stats., *Sexual exploitation by a therapist*, provided:

“Any person who suffers, directly or indirectly, a physical, mental or emotional injury caused by, resulting from or arising out of sexual contact with a therapist who is rendering or has rendered to that person psychotherapy, counseling or other assessment or treatment of or involving any mental or emotional illness, symptom or condition has a civil cause of action against the psychotherapist for all damages resulting from, arising out of or caused by that sexual contact. Consent is not an issue in an action under this section, unless the sexual contact that is the subject of the action occurred more than 6 months after the psychotherapy, counseling, assessment or treatment ended.” (Emphasis added)

11. § 895.70, Stats., *Sexual exploitation by a therapist*, is a law substantially related to practice as a psychotherapist or professional counselor.

12. Wis. Adm. Code § MPSW 20.02(11), which became effective December 1, 1993, prohibits professional counselors from having sexual contact with a former client for at least 2 years following the cessation of professional services.

13. By continuing to have sexual contact with Ms. A during the period December 1, 1993 through March 17, 1994, Respondent violated § MPSW 20.02(11).

COUNT IV

14. Respondent filed for divorce from her husband on December 12, 1993. Ms. A and her daughters began residing with Respondent and her children in May 1994. Respondent and Ms. A continued to live together as partners until June 2001.

15. Respondent had been the therapist for Ms. A's two daughters while providing family counseling in 1987. Respondent was also in a professional relationship with the girls when they were included as collaterals in Ms. A's treatment in 1988 and 1989.

16. Respondent commenced a personal and sexual relationship with Ms. A, the mother of the two girls, and began living with Ms. A and the girls in 1994, when the girls were 16 and 17. By doing so, Respondent failed to comply with an

accepted standard of practice that has a significant relationship to the protection of the health, safety or welfare of the girls, and did so in a manner which indicated that Respondent knew or should have known, but acted with indifference to or disregard of, the accepted standard of practice.

OTHER

17. Respondent reports that Ms. A’s disclosures of sexual and ritual abuse triggered Respondent to have her own memories regarding:

- sexual abuse by her father
- her great uncle’s sexual abuse and murder of her aunt in Respondent’s presence
- “trips” Respondent’s family would take to the cemetery
- occultic/pornographic incidents with her great uncle and father

18. Respondent reports that in 1991, Respondent began seeing a psychotherapist to deal with her own issues. Respondent says she became dissociative at this time and was vulnerable, both spiritually and emotionally. As an example, Respondent says that after one of her therapy sessions, Respondent was unable to drive or make a phone call because she was like a child. Because Respondent did not believe her mental health status impaired her judgment or treatment of others, she continued providing psychotherapy to her clients.

19. Respondent reports to DOE that she continues to believe that she received supernatural spiritual and demonic attacks on her home from Ms. A and other cult members. She also believes that Ms. A was programmed by a cult to infiltrate therapists helping victims of satanic ritualistic abuse and for that reason, seduced Respondent into the relationship they had together.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Professional Counselor Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to § 457.26(2), Stats.

2. The Professional Counselor Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board has authority to enter into this stipulated resolution of this matter pursuant to § 227.44(5), Stats.

3. Respondent, by entering into a sexual relationship with Ms. A, her former psychotherapy client, in the manner set out above, engaged in conduct which evidences a lack of knowledge or ability to apply professional principles or skills, which subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to § 457.26(2)(g), Stats. [Count I]

4. Respondent, by violating § 895.70, Stats., *Sexual exploitation by a therapist*, has violated a law which substantially relates to practice, which is defined as unprofessional conduct by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(2) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to § 457.26(2)(f), Stats. [Count II]

5. Respondent, by having sexual contact with a former client within 2 years of termination of therapy, has committed unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(11) and is subject to discipline pursuant to § 457.26(2)(f), Stats. [Count III]

6. Respondent, by beginning a sexual relationship with the mother of her former clients and then moving in and residing with the mother and the children, practiced in a grossly negligent manner, which is unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(22) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to § 457.26(2)(f), Stats. [Count IV]

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the SURRENDER by Patricia A. Peterson-Bilotto, L.P.C., Respondent, of her license as a professional counselor in the state of Wisconsin is hereby ACCEPTED, effective immediately.

The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the Section 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 June, 2003.

LaMarr Franklin

Vice-Chairperson

Professional Counselor Section