

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING,
AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY	:	
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST	:	
	:	FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
ERICA R. STEBANE,	:	
RESPONDENT.	:	

ORDER 0001306

[Division of Enforcement Case # 10 SOC 075]

The parties to this action for the purposes of Wis. Stat. § 227.53 are:

Erica R. Stebane
836 Martin Street
Menasha, WI 54952

Division of Enforcement
Department of Safety and Professional Services
1400 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Social Worker Section
Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional
Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board
Department of Safety and Professional Services
1400 East Washington Avenue
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 of this matter, subject to the approval of the Social Worker Section (Section). The Section has reviewed the attached Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Erica R. Stebane ("Respondent") was born on July 16, 1973 and is licensed as an Advanced Practice Social Worker in the State of Wisconsin (license # 127190-121). This license was first granted on January 30, 2007.
2. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board is 836 Martin Street, Menasha, Wisconsin.
3. From November 2, 2005 to December 17, 2007, Respondent was working as a Case Manager at Adult Care Consultants, Inc., located in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.
4. In April 2007, Respondent was assigned as Patient S.H.'s case manager. Patient S.H. is an individual diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.
5. In December 2007, Respondent was terminated from Adult Care Consultants, Inc.
6. Wisconsin Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(13) prohibits dual relationships, including friendship outside of a professional relationship.
7. On or around December 10, 2007, Respondent began to communicate with Patient S.H. through personal email accounts. After her termination on December 17, 2007, Respondent continued to communicate and socialize with Patient S.H. Respondent presented Patient S.H. with gifts, communicated with Patient S.H. through telephone and email, and met with Patient S.H. at various locations, such as restaurants, Respondent's home, and a public park.
8. Respondent was aware of Patient S.H.'s dissociative identity disorder and established relationships with each of Patient S.H.'s personalities. Each of Patient S.H.'s personalities became dependent on Respondent's attention and statements of affection.
9. On or around September 26, 2010, Respondent ended her personal relationship with Patient S.H. The abrupt termination and rejection subjected Patient S.H. to intense emotional pain and increased suicidal tendencies.
10. As a result of Respondent's personal relationship with and subsequent rejection of Patient S.H., Patient S.H.'s mental state declined and her issues with trust increased, significantly impeding her treatment.
11. Between December 2007 and October 2010, Respondent disclosed confidential information regarding Patient S.H.'s diagnosis and mental state to her husband. This disclosure was substantiated by emails between Respondent and Patient S.H., as well as correspondences between Patient S.H. and Respondent's husband.

12. Between December 2007 and October 2010, Respondent disclosed confidential information regarding her former employer, B.G., and co-worker, P.V., to Patient S.H.

13. On October 17, 2011, Respondent completed a two hour, one-on-one, face-to-face consultation with Dr. K.R., a Section-approved ethics expert. The consultation was tailored to thoroughly examine ethical issues pertaining to social work, including dual relationships, professional power and boundaries.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board has jurisdiction to act in this matter, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2), and is authorized to enter into this stipulated resolution of this matter pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).

2. The conduct described in paragraph 7, above, constitutes unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(13) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(f).

3. The conduct described in paragraph 11, above, constitutes unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(10) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(f).

4. The conduct described in paragraphs 7, 11 and 12, above, constitutes unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(22) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(f).

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. Erica R. Stebane, (license #127190-121) is SUSPENDED for a period of FOUR (4) WEEKS from the date of this Order. During the period of suspension, Respondent is prohibited from providing social work services.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

2. Respondent shall, within ninety (90) days from the date of this Order, pay costs of this proceeding in the amount of ONE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,400.00). Payment shall be made payable to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, and mailed to:

Department Monitor
Division of Enforcement
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 8935

Madison, WI 53708-8935
Telephone (608) 267-3817
Fax (608) 266-2264

3. Violation of any of the terms of this Order may be construed as conduct imperiling public health, safety and welfare and may result in a summary suspension of Respondent's license. The Section in its discretion may in the alternative impose additional conditions and limitations or other additional discipline for a violation of any of the terms of this Order. In the event Respondent fails to timely submit payment of the costs as set forth above, the Respondent's license (#127190-121) may, in the discretion of the Section or its designee, be SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has paid costs.

4. This Order is effective on the date of its signing.

Social Worker Section
Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional
Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board

By:



A Member of the Section

1/11/2012

Date