

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 DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

ERICA M. SCHOCH,
RESPONDENT.

:
:
:
:
:

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

ORDER 0001478

[Division of Enforcement Case #11 SOC 080]

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

Erica M. Schoch
421 Irvine Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

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 M. Schoch ("Respondent") was born on January 6, 1979 and is licensed as a Social Worker in the State of Wisconsin (license #8338-120). This license was first granted on September 4, 2003.

2. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board is 2909 East Park Avenue, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.

3. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent was employed with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections at the Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility (CVCTF) as a psychotherapist, providing services to inmates and those under supervision.

4. From August 2010 to September 2011, Respondent experienced a number of events in her personal life:

- a. In August 2010, Respondent's ex-husband informed her of his intention to remarry;
- b. In October 2010, Respondent's ex-husband filed for joint custody of their two children;
- c. In May 2011, Respondent's ex-husband remarried; and
- d. In June 2011, Respondent's ex-husband was granted joint custody of their two children.

5. As a result of these events, Respondent fell into a depressed and vulnerable state.

6. Around the end of August 2011, Respondent began to exchange letters of a romantic nature with an inmate enrolled in her Earned Release Group. Between August and September 2011, Respondent wrote three letters and received approximately five letters from the inmate.

7. On September 27, 2011, CVCTF became aware of Respondent's relationship with the inmate. An investigation was initiated and found that there was no evidence to suggest a physical relationship had developed or that delivery of articles to an inmate had occurred.

8. Prior to the CVCTF investigation, Respondent had recognized that she needed help and checked herself into a behavioral health unit at a local hospital. Respondent successfully completed treatment goals and is currently seeing a counselor.

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 above constitutes unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(11) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(f).

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. Respondent, Erica M. Schoch, (license #8338-120) is **SUSPENDED** for a period of SIX (6) MONTHS 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. Within ninety (90) days from the date of this Order, Respondent shall complete six (6) hours of education in boundaries for social workers.

- a. Respondent shall locate and have the Section or its designee pre-approve the educational programs prior to Respondent completing them.
- b. Within 30 days after Respondent has completed each educational program, Respondent shall submit to the Department Monitor proof of her attendance and that she has successfully completed the educational program.
- c. Respondent cannot apply these six hours of education to the biennial continuing education requirements. If Respondent obtains more than six hours of education to fulfill the requirements of this Order, then Respondent can use any of the hours of education obtained in excess of six hours towards the biennial continuing education requirements.
- d. Requests for pre-approval of education and proof of successful completion shall be submitted to the Department Monitor at the address below.
- e. Respondent is responsible for all costs of compliance with this Order.

3. Within ninety (90) days from the date of this Order, Respondent shall pay costs of this proceeding in the amount of TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$200.00). Payment shall be made payable to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services and mailed to:

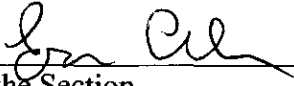
Department Monitor
Division of Enforcement
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935
Telephone (608) 267-3817
Fax (608) 266-2264

4. 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 pay the costs or submit proof of successful completion of the education as set forth above, the Respondent's license (#8338-120) may, in the discretion of the Section or its designee, be SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has paid costs and submitted proof of successful completion of the education.

5. 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

4/11/2012
Date