

## WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



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

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IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY :  
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST :  
 : FINAL DECISION AND ORDER  
STEPHANIE A. JOYCE, :  
RESPONDENT. :

0004861

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Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 16 CPC 008

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

Stephanie A. Joyce  
170 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Richland Center, WI 53581

Professional Counselor Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy,  
Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board  
P.O. Box 8366  
Madison, WI 53708-8366

Division of Legal Services and Compliance  
Department of Safety and Professional Services  
P.O. Box 7190  
Madison, WI 53707-7190

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final disposition of this matter, subject to the approval of the Professional Counselor Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board (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, Conclusions of Law and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent Stephanie A. Joyce (dob February 3, 1979) is licensed in the state of Wisconsin to practice professional counseling, having license number 4692-125, first issued on November 3, 2011 and current through February 28, 2017. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is 170 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Richland Center, Wisconsin 53581.

2. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent was employed as a professional counselor at a correctional treatment center (treatment center), located in Mauston, Wisconsin.

3. Between approximately September 2015 and January 2016, Respondent engaged in a romantic, non-sexual relationship with Patient A, her client at the treatment center.

4. Respondent relied on another patient, Patient B, to deliver cards and letters to and from Patient A.

5. On February 15, 2016, upon being confronted by her employer, Respondent resigned from her position and has not engaged in the practice of professional counseling since that time.

6. Respondent has been fully cooperative and forthcoming during the course of the Division's investigation.

7. In resolution of this matter, Respondent consents to the entry of the following Conclusions of Law and Order.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Professional Counselor 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 the attached Stipulation pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).

2. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Stephanie A. Joyce engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(11), by engaging in sexual contact, sexual conduct, or any other behavior with a client which could reasonably be construed as seductive. For purposes of this rule, a person shall continue to be a client for 2 years after the termination of professional services.

3. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Stephanie A. Joyce engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(13), by Failing to avoid dual relationships or relationships that may impair the credentialed person's objectivity or create a conflict of interest. Dual relationships prohibited to credentialed persons include the credentialed person treating the credentialed person's employers, employees, supervisors, supervisees, close friends or relatives, and any other person with whom the credentialed person shares any important continuing relationship.

4. As a result of the above violations, Stephanie A. Joyce is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(h).

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.
2. The license to practice professional counseling in the state of Wisconsin issued to Stephanie A. Joyce, (license number 4692-125) is **SUSPENDED** for at least one year from the date of March 14, 2016.
3. The suspension shall be terminated any time after one year, upon Respondent petitioning the Section and presenting proof satisfactory to the Section or its designee that Respondent has fulfilled the requirement for counseling set out below. The petition must be accompanied by a letter of support from the mental health care professional from whom Respondent sought treatment.
4. The license to practice professional counseling in the state of Wisconsin issued to Stephanie A. Joyce, (license number 4692-125) is **LIMITED** to require Respondent, during the period of suspension, to engage in counseling at least monthly for a period of 12 consecutive months, commencing on March 14, 2016. The objectives of the counseling are as follows:
  - a. Respondent shall demonstrate an understanding of her role in the boundary violations at issue;
  - b. Respondent shall demonstrate an understanding of the risk of harm she created for Patient A and Patient B; and
  - c. Respondent shall develop strategies to prevent future boundary violations.
5. Within 120 days from the date of this Order, Respondent shall pay **COSTS** of this matter in the amount of \$140.00.
6. Counseling documents and payment of costs (made payable to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services) shall be sent by Respondent to the Department Monitor at the address below:

Department Monitor  
Division of Legal Services and Compliance  
Department of Safety and Professional Services  
P.O. Box 7190, Madison, WI 53707-7190  
Telephone (608) 267-3817; Fax (608) 266-2264  
[DSPSMonitoring@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DSPSMonitoring@wisconsin.gov)

6. 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 for a violation of any of the terms of this Order. In the event Respondent fails to timely submit payment of the costs as ordered, or fails to submit counseling documentation as set forth above, Respondent's license (no. 4692-125) may, in the discretion of

the Section or its designee, be SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has complied with payment of the costs and counseling requirements.

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

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

by:   
A Member of the Section

8/3/16  
Date

Michael J. Berndt, Chief Legal Counsel

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

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY  
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

STEPHANIE A. JOYCE,  
RESPONDENT.

STIPULATION

0004861

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 16 CPC 008

Respondent Stephanie A. Joyce and the Division of Legal Services and Compliance, Department of Safety and Professional Services stipulate as follows:

1. This Stipulation is entered into as a result of a pending investigation by the Division of Legal Services and Compliance. Respondent consents to the resolution of this investigation by Stipulation.

2. Respondent understands that by signing this Stipulation, Respondent voluntarily and knowingly waives the following rights:

- the right to a hearing on the allegations against Respondent, at which time the State has the burden of proving those allegations by a preponderance of the evidence;
- the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against Respondent;
- the right to call witnesses on Respondent's behalf and to compel their attendance by subpoena;
- the right to testify on Respondent's own behalf;
- the right to file objections to any proposed decision and to present briefs or oral arguments to the officials who are to render the final decision;
- the right to petition for rehearing; and
- all other applicable rights afforded to Respondent under the United States Constitution, the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and other provisions of state or federal law.

3. Respondent is aware of Respondent's right to seek legal representation and has been provided an opportunity to obtain legal counsel before signing this Stipulation.

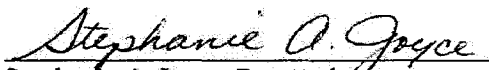
4. Respondent agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Professional Counselor Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board (Section). The parties to the Stipulation consent to the entry of the attached Final Decision and Order without further notice, pleading, appearance or consent of the parties. Respondent waives all rights to any appeal of the Section's order, if adopted in the form as attached.

5. If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Section, the parties shall not be bound by the contents of this Stipulation, and the matter shall then be returned to the Division of Legal Services and Compliance for further proceedings. In the event that the Stipulation is not accepted by the Section, the parties agree not to contend that the Section has been prejudiced or biased in any manner by the consideration of this attempted resolution.

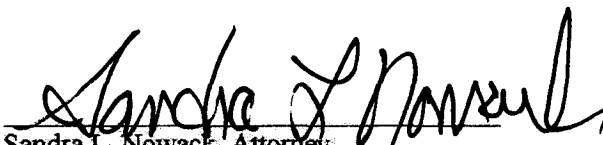
6. The parties to this Stipulation agree that the attorney or other agent for the Division of Legal Services and Compliance and any member of the Section ever assigned as an advisor in this investigation may appear before the Section in open or closed session, without the presence of Respondent or Respondent's attorney, for purposes of speaking in support of this agreement and answering questions that any member of the Section may have in connection with deliberations on the Stipulation. Additionally, any such advisor may vote on whether the Section should accept this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

7. Respondent is informed that should the Section adopt this Stipulation, the Section's Final Decision and Order is a public record and will be published in accordance with standard Department procedure.

8. The Division of Legal Services and Compliance joins Respondent in recommending the Section adopt this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

  
Stephanie A. Joyce, Respondent  
170 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Richland Center, WI 53581  
License no. 4692-125

3-24-16  
Date

  
Sandra L. Nowack, Attorney  
Department of Safety and Professional Services  
Division of Legal Services and Compliance  
P.O. Box 7190  
Madison, WI 53707-7190

3/25/16  
Date