

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

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

DEBRA M. PIERSON, L.P.C.,
RESPONDENT.

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FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

ORDER 0007339

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 19 CPC 009

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

Debra M. Pierson, L.P.C.
Hartland, Wisconsin 53029

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 Debra M. Pierson, L.P.C., (Year of Birth 1957) is licensed in the state of Wisconsin to practice professional counseling, having license number 3797-125, first issued on October 2, 2016, and current through February 28, 2021. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is Hartland, Wisconsin 53029.

2. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent was employed as a professional counselor at a behavioral health clinic, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53214.

3. Patient A self-referred to Respondent on February 6, 2018, to address her continuing anxiety and depression. Approximately four (4) months later, Patient A revealed to Respondent that she believed she was sexually abused as a child but, according to Respondent, did not present memories or symptoms to indicate she was abused.

4. At her counseling session with Respondent on December 11, 2018, Patient A alleged that Respondent completely changed her position about Patient A and told her that she made up the abuse, she was experiencing difficulties at work because she did not like her job, and that Patient A needed to repair her relationships with her family and friends.

5. Respondent denies the allegations related to the care she provided Patient A.

6. Respondent's file for Patient A did not contain a treatment plan signed by Patient A nor did it contain 90-day plan reviews.

7. For the 2017 to 2019 license biennium, Respondent provided documentation for sixteen (16) continuing education credits, none of which were in ethics and boundaries.

8. On Respondent's 2019 renewal application, Respondent stated that she completed the necessary continuing education requirements.

9. 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, Respondent engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(18), by failing to maintain adequate records relating to services provided a client in the course of a professional relationship.

3. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 19.02(1), by failing to complete at least thirty (30) continuing education credit hours in approved continuing education programs during each two (2) year credential period and certify on the application for renewal that all required education was completed.

4. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 19.02(2), by failing to obtain the minimum of four (4) continuing education credit hours, of the required thirty (30) continuing education credit hours, in the area of professional ethics and boundaries related to the practice of marriage and family therapy, professional counseling, or social work.

5. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(a), by making a material misstatement in an application for renewal of a credential.

6. As a result of the above violations, Respondent is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(a), (f), (g), and (h).

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.
2. Respondent is REPRIMANDED.
3. The license to practice professional counseling issued to Respondent (license number 3797-125) is LIMITED as follows:
 - a. Within twelve (12) months of the date of this Order, Respondent shall successfully complete three (3) hours of education on the topic of diagnosis and treatment planning and six (6) hours of education on the topic of trauma-informed care and evidence-based treatments for post-traumatic stress offered in-person or online by a provider pre-approved by the Section's monitoring liaison, including taking and passing any exam offered for the courses.
 - b. Respondent shall submit proof of successful completion of the ordered education in the form of verification from the institution providing the education to the Department Monitor at the address stated below.
 - c. None of the education completed pursuant to this requirement may be used to satisfy any other continuing education requirements that have been or may be instituted by the Section or Department, and also may not be used in future attempts to upgrade a credential in Wisconsin.
 - d. The Section's monitoring liaison may change the number of credit hours and/or education topics in response to a request from Respondent. The monitoring liaison may consider the topic availability and/or hours of education when determining if a change to the ordered education should occur.
 - e. This limitation shall be removed from Respondent's license after satisfying the Section or its designee that Respondent has successfully completed all the ordered education.
4. The license to practice professional counseling issued to Respondent (license number 3797-125) is FURTHER LIMITED as follows:
 - a. Within twelve (12) months of the date of this Order, Respondent shall successfully complete 14 hours of continuing education, with at least 4 of those hours being on the topics of ethics and boundaries, offered in-person or online by a provider pre-approved by the Section's monitoring liaison, including taking and passing any

exam offered for the courses to satisfy the missing continuing education from the 2017-2019 biennium.

- b. Respondent shall submit proof of successful completion of the ordered education in the form of verification from the institution providing the education to the Department Monitor at the address stated below.
- c. None of the education completed pursuant to this requirement may be used to satisfy any other continuing education or remedial education requirements that have been or may be instituted by the Section or Department, and also may not be used in future attempts to upgrade a credential in Wisconsin.
- d. The Section's monitoring liaison may change the number of credit hours and/or education topics in response to a request from Respondent. The monitoring liaison may consider the topic availability and/or hours of education when determining if a change to the ordered education should occur.
- e. This limitation shall be removed from Respondent's license after satisfying the Section or its designee that Respondent has successfully completed all the ordered education.

5. Within ninety (90) days from the date of this Order, Respondent shall pay COSTS of this matter in the amount of \$1,019.00.

6. Request for approval of courses, proof of successful course completion 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

Respondent may also submit this information online at: <http://dspsmonitoring.wi.gov>

7. In the event that Respondent violates any term of this Order, Respondent's license (no. 3797-125) to practice professional counseling in the state of Wisconsin may, in the discretion of the Section or its designee, be SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has complied with the terms of the Order. The Section may, in addition and/or in the alternative refer any violation of this Order to the Division of Legal Services and Compliance for further investigation and action.

8. 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: Andrea Simon
A Member of the Section

20 April 2021
Date

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

DEBRA M. PIERSON, L.P.C.,
RESPONDENT.

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STIPULATION

ORDER 0007339

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 19 CPC 009

Respondent Debra M. Pierson, L.P.C. 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. Respondent
is represented by Attorney Vincent Scipior.

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

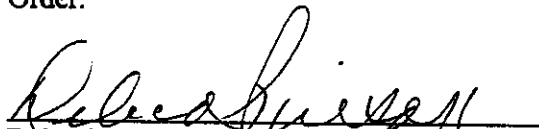
or consent of the parties. Respondent waives all rights to any appeal of the Section's order, if adopted in the form as attached.

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.

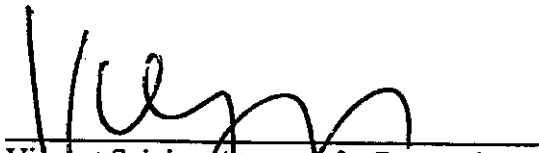
6. The parties to this Stipulation agree that the attorney or other agent for the Division of Legal Services and Compliance and any member of the Section ever assigned as an advisor in this investigation may appear before the Section in open or closed session, without the presence of Respondent or Respondent's 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.


Debra M. Pierson, L.P.C., Respondent
Hartland, WI 53029
License no. 3797-125

2/1/21
Date


Vincent Scipior, Attorney for Respondent
Coyne, Schultz, Becker & Bauer, SC
150 East Gilman Street, Suite 1000
Madison, WI 53703

2/5/21
Date


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

2/5/21
Date