

IN THE MATTER OF

THELMA A. BUTLER, CSC-AD

Respondent

Certificate Number: SC1980

BEFORE THE MARYLAND STATE

BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL

COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS

Case Number: 2020-053

CONSENT ORDER

The Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the “Board”) notified **THELMA A. BUTLER, CSC-AD** (“the Respondent”), of the Board’s intent to revoke her certificate to practice as a Certified Supervised Counselor -- Alcohol and Drug, Certificate Number SC1980, under the Maryland Professional Counselors and Therapists Act (the “Act”) codified at Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 17-101 *et seq.* (2021 Repl. Vol. and 2025 Supp.).

Specifically, the Board bases its intent to revoke on the following provisions of the Act:

§ 17-509. Denial, probation, suspension or revocation of license of trainee status, license or certificate.

Subject to the hearing provisions of § 17-511 of this subtitle, the Board, on the affirmative vote of a majority of its members then serving, may deny trainee status, a license, or a certificate to any applicant, place any trainee, licensee, or certificate holder on probation, reprimand any trainee, licensee, or certificate holder, or suspend, rescind, or revoke the status of any trainee, a license of any licensee, or a certificate of any certificate holder if the applicant, trainee, licensee, or certificate holder:

- (8) Violates the code of ethics adopted by the Board;
- (9) Knowingly violates any provision of this title;
- (13) Violates any rule or regulation adopted by the Board;

- (16) Commits an act of immoral or unprofessional conduct in the practice of clinical or nonclinical counseling or therapy[.]

Pursuant to Health Occ. § 17-509(8), (9), (13), and (16) shown above, the Board also bases its intent to revoke on the following provisions of the Code of Ethics adopted by the Board, codified at Md. Code Regs. (“COMAR”) 10.58.03 *et seq.*, in particular:

COMAR 10.58.03.04

A. A counselor shall:

- (11) Be familiar with and adhere to this chapter;
- (14) Take reasonable precautions to protect clients from physical or psychological trauma.

B. A counselor may not:

- (3) Enter into relationships that could compromise a counselors objectivity or create a conflict of interest.

COMAR 10.58.03.05

A. Client Welfare and Rights

(2) A counselor may not:

- (a) Place or participate in placing clients in positions that may result in damaging the interests and welfare of clients, employees, employers, or the public[.]

COMAR 10.58.03.09

C. Relationship with Former Clients.

- (1) Except as set forth in §C(3) of this regulation, a counselor may not engage in sexual behavior with a former client.

...

- (3) A counselor may enter into a relationship with an individual with whom a counselor's prior professional contact was brief, peripheral, consultative, or indirect, and did not constitute a therapeutic relationship.

On May 6, 2026, the parties appeared at a Case Resolution Conference (“CRC”) before a committee of the Board. The parties included the Respondent, represented by counsel, and the Administrative Prosecutor assigned to the case. As a result of the negotiations at the CRC, the parties agreed to the following Consent Order consisting of Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board finds the following:

BACKGROUND

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent held an active certificate to practice as a certified supervised counselor – alcohol and drug (“CSC-AD”) in the State of Maryland. The Respondent was originally issued her CSC-AD on June 20, 2013, under Certificate Number SC1980. The Respondent’s CSC-AD is currently active and is scheduled to expire on January 31, 2027.

2. The Respondent was employed as a counselor at a facility (the “Facility”)¹ from on or about July 1, 2015, until on or about November 11, 2019.

COMPLAINT

3. On or about December 16, 2019, the Board received a Complaint (the “Complaint”) submitted by the Clinic Director (“Clinic Director”) of the Facility, which alleged that the Respondent was involved in a romantic relationship with a former patient

¹ For confidentiality and privacy purposes, the names of individuals and facilities involved in this case are not disclosed in this document. The Respondent may obtain the names of all individuals and facilities referenced in this document by contacting the administrative prosecutor.

(the "Patient"). The Complaint further stated that an employee (the "Employee") of the Facility advised the Clinic Director that the Respondent had shown the Employee pictures of the Respondent and the Patient dressed up for Halloween.

4. After receiving the Complaint from the Respondent's Clinic Director, the Board initiated an investigation of the Respondent under Case Number 2020-053.

BOARD INVESTIGATION

5. As part of its investigation, the Board subpoenaed the Respondent's personnel records from the Facility, obtained an affidavit from the Respondent, and interviewed the Respondent.

Affidavit

6. According to an affidavit dated and signed by the Respondent on September 10, 2025, the Respondent affirmed under the penalties of perjury that the following were true to the best of her personal knowledge:

- a. The Respondent was employed at the Facility as a counselor.
- b. The Patient began receiving services at the Facility in or around 2017 or 2018.
- c. The Patient received treatment at the Facility until approximately the summer of 2018.
- d. The Respondent's employment at the Facility ended after the Patient was discharged from the Facility.

Respondent's Personnel Records from The Facility

7. On or about August 10, 2015, the Respondent signed a memo as part of the conditions of her employment at the Facility in which she agreed not to engage in sexual

behavior with patients or violate professional boundaries. The memo explained: “According to Maryland law, sexual misconduct and client exploitation is unethical and is a specific cause for disciplinary action.”

8. On or about August 10, 2015, the Respondent signed the “Ethical Guidelines for [Facility] Employees” (the “Facility Ethical Guidelines”) in which she agreed, in part, that: “Employees are not permitted to have contact with former consumers. Former employees are not permitted to have contact with current or former consumers.” The Facility Ethical Guidelines also state: “Employees under no circumstances engage [*sic*] in sexual activities with consumers of [the Facility]” and “Staff cannot knowingly have personal relationships with [a Facility] client unless it was a pre-existing relationship that has been disclosed.”

9. Included in the Respondent’s personnel records from the Facility was a screenshot of the Respondent’s Facebook page which was accessed on or about November 11, 2019, and contained multiple photos of the Respondent with the Patient.

Respondent’s Interview

10. On September 10, 2025, the Board’s investigator interviewed the Respondent, at which time, the Respondent stated, in part, the following under oath:

- a. The Respondent admitted that she met the Patient at the Facility, that she provided counseling services to the Patient at the Facility, and that they began a relationship after the Patient completed treatment at the Facility.

- b. The Respondent's romantic relationship with the Patient began in August or September 2019. At the time of the interview, the Respondent was still in a relationship with the Patient.
- c. The Respondent confirmed that the screenshot of her Facebook page included photos of her with the Patient. She also confirmed that one of the Patient's relatives posted a comment on her Facebook page.
- d. On or about September 11, 2019, the Respondent listed the Patient as a beneficiary on her life insurance policy.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent violated Health Occ. § 17-509(8) (violates the code of ethics adopted by the Board), § 17-509(9) (knowingly violates any provisions of this title), § 17-509(13) (violates any rule or regulation adopted by the Board), § 17-509(16) (commits an act of immoral or unprofessional conduct in the practice of clinical or nonclinical counseling or therapy), and COMAR 10.58.03.04(A)(11), (14), (B)(3); 10.58.03.05(A)(2)(a); and 10.58.03.09(C)(1), and (3).

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 17th day of July, 2026, by a majority of the quorum of the Board considering this case hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent's certificate to practice as a certified supervised counselor – alcohol and drug is hereby **SUSPENDED** for a total period of **TWO (2) YEARS with all but ONE (1) YEAR stayed** as of the effective date of the Consent Order, and it is further,

ORDERED that following the conclusion of the period of suspension, the Respondent's certificate to practice as a certified supervised counselor – alcohol and drug shall be placed on **PROBATION for a minimum period of TWO (2) YEARS**, and continuing until the Respondent has successfully completed the following probationary conditions:

1. During the probationary period, the Respondent shall be supervised by a Board-approved supervisor ("Probation Supervisor"), subject to the following terms and conditions:
 - a. Prior to the commencement of probation, the Respondent shall contact the Board to obtain a list of Board-approved supervisors and choose a Probation Supervisor from the list. The Respondent shall provide the Probation Supervisor with a copy of this Consent Order prior to their initial meeting. The Board may release any portion of the investigative file as it deems necessary by the Board and/or the Probation Supervisor;
 - b. The Respondent shall meet with the supervisor for a minimum of one (1) hour per month and provide the supervisor with full access to the Respondent's case files and documentation;

- c. The Respondent shall fully comply with all Board guidelines relating to probation supervision as well as all recommendations from the Probation Supervisor;
 - d. The Respondent shall ensure that the Probation Supervisor provide the Board with written quarterly reports on the Respondent's progress during the supervision;
 - e. At the conclusion of the two (2) years of supervision, the Respondent may petition the Board, or a designated committee of the Board, for a termination of the supervision requirement. The Board or its designated committee may terminate the Respondent's supervision requirement if it deems such action is appropriate and the Probation Supervisor recommends such actions; and
 - f. A negative report from the Probation Supervisor or any failure to comply with the Probation Supervisor's recommendations shall be deemed a violation of probation or of this Consent Order.
2. Within **SIX (6) MONTHS** of the effective date of the Consent Order, the Respondent shall submit documentation to the Board showing that she has successfully completed a three-credit CEU **course on ethics**, approved in advance by the Board.

ORDERED that the effective date of this Order is the date that it is signed by the Board; and it is further,

ORDERED that the Respondent shall obey all laws and regulations that govern the practice of professional counselors and therapists in the State of Maryland; and it is further,

ORDERED that the Respondent shall bear all costs of complying with this Order; and it is further,

ORDERED that no part of the training or education that the Respondent receives in order to comply with the Consent Order may be applied to her continuing education credits required for certification; and it is further,

ORDERED that if the Respondent violates any of the terms and conditions of this Consent Order, the Board, in its discretion, after notice and an opportunity for an evidentiary hearing if there is a genuine dispute as to the underlying facts, or an opportunity for a show cause hearing before the Board otherwise, may impose any sanction that the Board may have imposed in this case, including additional probationary terms and conditions, a reprimand, suspension, revocation and/or a monetary penalty; and it is further,

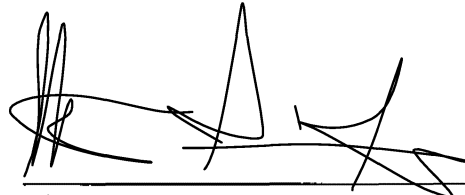
ORDERED that within five (5) days of the effective date of this Consent Order, the Respondent shall furnish her employer(s) and supervisor with copies of this Consent Order and shall submit written proof of the employer(s) and supervisor's receipt of the Consent Order, and it is further,

ORDERED that, for purposes of public disclosure and, as permitted by Md. General Provisions §§ 4-101 *et. seq.* (2021 Repl. Vol. and 2025 Supp.), this document consists of the contents of the foregoing Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order,

and is reportable to any entity to whom the Board is obligated to report, and will be displayed on the Board's website.

07/17/2026

Date



Sharita Sivels-Stevens, LCPC, Board Chair
Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and
Therapists

CONSENT

I, Thelma A. Butler, CSC-AD, Certificate No. SC1980, by affixing my signature hereto, acknowledge that:

1. I am represented by counsel and have consulted with counsel on this matter. I have knowingly and voluntarily entered into this Consent Order. By this Consent and for the purpose of resolving the issues raised by the Board, I agree and accept to be bound by the foregoing Consent Order and its conditions.
2. I am aware that I am entitled to a formal evidentiary hearing, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 19-312 (2021 Repl. Vol. and 2025 Supp.) and Md. State Gov't, §§ 10-201 et. seq. (2021 Repl. Vol. and 2025 Supp.).
3. I acknowledge the validity and enforceability of this Consent Order as if entered into after the conclusions of a formal evidentiary hearing in which I would have the right to counsel, to confront witnesses, to give testimony, to call witnesses on my own behalf, and to all other substantive and procedural precautions as provided by law. I am waiving those procedural and substantive processes.
4. I voluntarily enter into and agree to abide by the terms and conditions set forth herein as a resolution of the Charges against me. I waive any right to contest the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and I waive my right to a full evidentiary hearing, as set forth above, and any right to appeal this Consent Order or any adverse ruling of the Board that might have followed any such hearing.
5. I acknowledge that any failure to abide by the conditions set forth in

this Consent Order, I may be subject to further disciplinary actions, including up to revocation of my license to practice as a certified supervised counselor – alcohol and drug.

6. I sign this Consent Order voluntarily, without reservation, and I fully understand and comprehend the language, meaning, and terms of this Consent Order.

6/14/26
Date

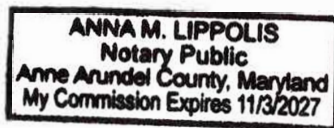
Thelma A. Butler, CSC-AD
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NOTARY

STATE OF Maryland
COUNTY OF Anne Arundel

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 14 day of June, 2026 before me, a Notary Public of the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared **THELMA A. BUTLER, CSC-AD, Certificate No. SC1980**, and gave oath in due form of law that the foregoing Consent Order was her voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESS, my hand and Notary Seal



Anna M. Lippolis
Notary Public

My commission expires: 11/3/27

