

IN THE MATTER OF	*	BEFORE THE MARYLAND
EMILY T. COOK, LCMFT	*	BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL
RESPONDENT	*	COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS
LICENSE NO.: LCM496	*	CASE NO.: 2021- 001

* * * * *

CONSENT ORDER

The Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (“the Board”) notified **Emily T. Cook**, License No.: **LCM496** (the “Respondent”), of the Board’s intent to revoke her license to practice as a licensed Clinical marriage and family therapist, under the Maryland Professional Counselors and Therapists Act (the “Act”), Md Code Ann., Health Occupations (“Health Occ.”) §§ 17-101 *et seq.* (2021 Repl. Vol.).

The pertinent provisions of the Act state:

§17–509. Denial, probation, suspension or revocation of certificate applicant or holder.

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;

....

- (11) Is professionally, physically, or mentally incompetent;

(13) Violates any rule or regulation adopted by the Board[.]

COMAR 10.58.03.04 Ethical Responsibility.

A. A counselor shall:

....

(11) Be familiar with and adhere to this chapter[.] B.

A counselor may not:

....

(3) Enter into relationships that could compromise a counselor's objectivity or create a conflict of interest.

COMAR 10.58.03.05 The Counseling Relationship. 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 the welfare of clients, employees, employers, or the public;

....

(d) Foster dependent counseling relationships. B.

Dual Relationships.

(1) A counselor shall:

(a) Avoid dual relationships with clients; and

(b) Take appropriate measures, including but not limited to, informed consent, consultation, supervision, and documentation to ensure that judgment is not impaired and no exploitation occurs if a dual relationship cannot be avoided.

COMAR 10.58.03.09 Sexual Misconduct. C.

Relationship with Former Clients.

....

- (2) A counselor may not terminate professional services or a professional relationship with a client in order to enter into a nonprofessional, social, or sexual relationship with a client or an individual with whom a client has a close personal relationship.

FINDINGS OF FACT¹

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was licensed to practice professional counseling.

2. The Respondent was originally issued a license to practice as a clinical marriage and family therapist in Maryland on or about May 19, 2014. The Respondent's license expires on or about January 31, 2024.

3. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent owned and operate a practice (the "Practice") located in Bethesda, Maryland. The Practice provides individual and family therapy to clients. The Respondent was the sole practitioner at the Practice.

4. On or about July 7, 2020, the Board received a complaint from a colleague of the Respondent (the "Complainant"). The Complainant alleged in the complaint that she was informed by a client of the Complainant (the "Client's Spouse") of reported inappropriate behavior between the Respondent and the Respondent's client (the "Client.").

¹ The names of the Client and the Client's Spouse have not been disclosed in order to protect privacy.

5. On or about July 24, 2020, the Respondent informed the Board of her dual relationship with the Client.

6. An investigation by Board staff revealed the following:

a. On or about September 16, 2018, the Client began individual therapy sessions with the Respondent. The Respondent conducted approximately one hundred and sixty-two individual therapy sessions (162) with the Client. The Respondent ended individual therapy with the Client on or about May 6, 2020.

The Respondent's conduct with the Client and the Client's Spouse

b. On several occasions, the Respondent's therapy sessions with the Client took place outside of the Respondent's practice location. The Respondent conducted therapy sessions (1) in the Client's home, (2) in the Respondent's home; (3) while she and the Client ran together; and (4) in parking lots after the Respondent and the Client finished running together.

c. During the therapeutic relationship, the Client exhibited suicidal ideations. On one one occasion, the Client was hospitalized for observation and treatment.

d. Starting in 2018, the Respondent ended e-mail exchanges with the Client, with "Love Emily".

e. In or around April 2019, the Respondent began exchanging emails with the Client that were unrelated to the therapeutic relationship. In these email exchanges, the Respondent discussed aspects of her personal life.

f. In or around April 2019, the Client also began using terms of endearment at the end of her e-mail exchanges with the Respondent. On numerous occasions, the Client and the Respondent ended their e-mail exchanges with "Love", "I love you", "I love you always", or "I love you so much". The Client and the Respondent used these terms of endearment in their email correspondence until the therapeutic relationship ended.

g. In or around December 20, 2019, e-mail exchange between the Respondent and the Client, the Respondent told the Client that

“it’s ok with me to say we love each other” In this same e-mail exchange, the Respondent also forwarded a letter from the Respondent to the minor children of the Client and the Client’s Spouse.

- h. On or about December 19, 2019, the Respondent sent an e-mail to the Client’s Spouse unrelated to the therapeutic relationship. In this e-mail, the Respondent told the Client’s Spouse that she wanted to give the Client a “gift” by registering her and the Client for a 5k race scheduled for March 22, 2020. The Respondent also provided the Client’s Spouse with details of the race. On or about January 29, 2020, the Respondent sent the Client an e-mail confirming that they were both registered for the race. The Respondent and Client spent time training for the race by going on practice several runs together. However, the actual race was cancelled.**
- i. During a therapy session with the Client, the Respondent disclosed personal information about her life, including information about her pending divorce.**
- j. In or around June 2020, following the end of individual therapy, the Client, the Respondent began a social relationship with the Client and the Client’s Spouse. The social relationship also included the Respondent’s children and the children of the Client and the Client’s Spouse. The social relationship included visits to each other’s homes and making plans for joint vacations.**
- k. The Respondent ended her social relationship with the Client and the Client’s Spouse after learning that the Client’s Spouse and the Complainant were uncomfortable with the social relationship.**
- l. The Respondent has not communicated with the Client and the Client’s Spouse since July 4, 2020.**

7. In a letter to Board staff dated July 9, 2020, the Respondent self-reported that after the termination of the therapeutic relationship with the Client, she had initiated a social relationship with the Client. The Respondent also indicated in her letter that she

reviewed the laws and regulations that govern the of conduct professional counselors and therapists before she chose to have a social relationship with the Client.

8. In her July 9, 2020, letter to Board staff, the Respondent stated that her social relationship with the Client also included the Client’s Spouse, the children of the Client and the Client’s Spouse, and her own children. The Respondent continued this relationship until late June 2020.

9. In a letter to Board staff dated June 15, 2021, the Respondent indicated that she had developed a “friendship” with the Client during the therapeutic relationship. The Respondent also indicated in her letter that she discussed information about her personal life with the Client, exchanged and conducted telephone conversations outside of her therapeutic relationship with the Client.

10. The Respondent was fully cooperative with Board’s investigation.

11. The Respondent’s conduct as set forth above violates Health Occ. §17-509 (8), (9), and (13); COMAR 10.57.03.04A(11) and (3); COMAR 10.58.03.05A (2) (a) and (d) and B(1)(a).

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Board concludes that the Respondent’s conduct violates Health Occ. §17-509 (8), (9), (11), and (13); and COMAR 10.58.03.04A(11) and B(3); and COMAR 10.58.03.05A (2)(a) and (d) and B(1)(a).

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 21st day of October, 2022, by a majority of the full authorized membership of the Board hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent's license to practice as a licensed clinical marriage and family therapist is **SUSPENDED a period of two years, with all but one (1) year STAYED**; and it is further

ORDERED that following the active one-year period of said suspension, the Respondent shall be placed **PROBATION** for a period of **TWO (2) YEARS** and until the Respondent has fully and satisfactorily complied with the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The Respondent shall take and pass a Board approved ethics course. Any continuing education credits earn by the Respondent shall not count toward the continuing education credits required for licensure.
- (2) The Respondent shall maintain her continuing education credit requirements for licensure.
- (3) The Respondent shall practice under the supervision of a Board approved Supervisor.
- (4) Within ten (10) days of being placed on probation, the Respondent shall provide the Board approved Supervisor with a signed copy of this Consent Order.
- (5) The Respondent shall ensure that the Board approved Supervisor submits quarterly reports to the Board during her probationary period.
- (6) The Respondent shall immediately notify the Board if the Board approved Supervisor for any reason is unable to perform the duties of a Board approved supervisor.

- (7) Within ten (10) working days of being placed on probation, the Respondent shall provide the Board of the name and contact information of her mental health provider.
- (8) Within ten (10) working days of being placed on probation, the Respondent shall provide her mental health provider with a signed copy of the Consent Order.
- (9) The Respondent shall meet with her mental health provider. The frequency that the Respondent meets with her mental health provider shall be based on the recommendation made by her mental health provider. The recommendation **shall be for no less than once per month.**
- (10) The Respondent shall ensure that her mental health provider submits quarterly reports to the Board during her probationary period.
- (11) In the event the mental health provider discontinues providing services to the Respondent for any reason, the Respondent shall immediately notify the Board and submit a replacement candidate to serve as her mental health provider under the terms specified above.
- (12) The Respondent shall pay a fine in the amount of **TWO THOUSAND (\$2000) DOLLARS** by certified check or money order to the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapist.
- (13) The Respondent shall not serve and/or apply to be a Board Approved Supervisor.
- (14) The Respondent shall comply with the Maryland Professional Counselors and Therapists Act and all laws, statutes and regulations pertaining thereto; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall return to the Board all professional counseling licenses within five (5) days of the effective date of this Order; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent may not apply for any license, certificate, and/or registration that govern the Act.

ORDERED that at the conclusion of the probationary period, the Respondent may submit a written petition to the Board requesting termination of her probation. The Respondent must submit proof that she has satisfied the probationary terms and conditions set forth in this Consent Order. The Respondent must also submit proof that she has completed her continuing education requirements under this Consent Order. After consideration of the petition, the probation may be terminated, through an order of the Board, or a designated Board committee. The Board, or designated Board committee, may grant the termination if the Respondent has fully and satisfactorily complied with all the probationary terms and conditions under this Consent Order and there are no pending complaints; 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, may impose any sanction which the Board may have imposed in this case, including probationary terms and conditions, a reprimand, suspension, revocation and/or a monetary penalty; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall be responsible for all costs incurred in fulfilling the terms and conditions of this Consent Order; and it is further

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

ORDERED that this Consent Order is reportable to the National Practitioner Data Bank; and it further

ORDERED that this document constitutes a formal disciplinary action of the Board, and this Order is final and is a public document for purposes of public disclosure, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., General Provisions § 4-101 & § 4-333 (2021 Repl. Vol.).

10/21/2022
Date


Mary N. Drotleff, M.S. LCMFT

Board Chair
Maryland Board of Professional Counselors
and Therapists

EMILY T. COOK, LCMFT

I, **EMILY T. COOK, LCMFT** acknowledge that I have been represented by an attorney before entering into this Consent Order. By this Consent Order 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. I waive any rights I may have to contest the Findings of Fact and the Conclusions of Law. I acknowledge the validity of this Consent Order as if entered into after the conclusion of a formal evidentiary hearing in which I would have had the right to counsel, to confront witnesses, to give testimony, to call witnesses on my own behalf, and to all other substantive and procedural protections provided by the law. I acknowledge the legal authority and jurisdiction of the Board to initiate these proceedings and to issue and enforce this Consent Order. I affirm that I am waiving my right to appeal

any adverse ruling of the Board that might have followed any such hearing. I sign this Consent Order, voluntarily and without reservation, after having an opportunity to consult with counsel, and I fully understand and comprehend the language, meaning and terms of this Consent Order.

10/11/22
Date

Emily T. Cook
Emily T. Cook, LCMFT

NOTARY

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 11th day of October, 2022 before me, a Notary Public of the State and City/County aforesaid, personally appeared, **EMILY T. COOK** and declared and affirmed under the penalties of perjury that signing the foregoing Letter of Surrender was her voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESS my hand and Notarial seal.

Deborah Lynn Gaynor
Notary Public

My Commission expires: _____

DEBORAH LYNN GAYNOR
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF MARYLAND
My Commission Expires April 15, 2023

