

IN THE MATTER OF * BEFORE THE MARYLAND STATE
CRYSTAL JOHNSON, LMSW * BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK
RESPONDENT * EXAMINERS
LICENSE NUMBER: 16137 * CASE NO.: 2020-2582

FINAL ORDER

On or about December 9, 2019, the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) issued charges concerning Crystal Johnson, LMSW, License Number: 16137, (the “Respondent”), under the Maryland Social Workers Act (the “Act”), Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. (“Heath. Occ.”) §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. & 2019 Supp.). Specifically, the Board charged the Respondent with violating the following:

Health Occ. § 19-311. Denials, reprimands, suspensions, and revocations-Grounds.

Subject to the hearing provisions of § 19–312 of this subtitle, the Board may deny a license to any applicant, fine a licensee, reprimand any licensee, place any licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee:

- (4) Commits any act of ... misconduct in the practice of social work;
- (6) Engages in a course of conduct that is inconsistent with generally accepted professional standards in the practice of social work;
- (7) Is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or to a crime involving moral turpitude, whether or not any appeal, or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside;

(12) Fails to file or record any report as required by law...;

(16) Fails to cooperate with a lawful investigation conducted by the Board[.]

COMAR 10.42.03

.03 Responsibilities to Clients.

A. The licensee shall:

(3) Notify the client promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of service in relation to the client's need or preference if the licensee anticipates the termination or interruption of service;

(4) Prepare and disseminate to an identified colleague or record custodian a written plan of the transfer of clients and files in the event of the licensee's incapacitation, death, or termination of service; and

(5) Maintain documentation in the client's record which:

(a) Is legible;

(b) Accurately reflects the services provided, including treatment plans, treatment goals, and contact notes;

(c) Indicates the time and date the services were provided;

(d) Protects the client's privacy by including only information directly relevant to the delivery of services;

(e) Is sufficient and timely to facilitate the delivery and continuity of future services[.]

PROCEDURAL SUMMARY

The Board issued a notice of hearing to the Respondent by regular mail and certified mail return receipt for a virtual hearing to be held on February 12, 2021 at 2:00 pm. The Board held the hearing virtually using the Google Meet platform.

A quorum of the Board was present. The State was represented by Roberta Gill, Assistant Attorney General. The Respondent was not present, and was not represented by counsel in her absence.

The hearing convened to decide whether the Respondent violated the pertinent provisions of the Act, and if the Respondent committed any such violations, what sanction, if any, is appropriate.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

The Board accepted the State's evidence which included testimony from two witnesses: Sabrina Dowlut-Beard, LMSW, RN, and Garcia Gilmore, Investigator, Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners. The State also submitted the following documents, which were admitted into evidence:

Exhibit 1: Complaint, 12/3/18

Exhibit 2: Respondent's Letter of Resignation, 8/17/18

Exhibit 3: License Verification

Exhibit 4: Notice of Investigation and Complaint, 5/6/19

Subpoena Ad Testificandum, 6/13/19

Exhibit 5: Copies of "Return to Sender" Envelope & Certified Mail Receipts, 6/24/19

Exhibit 6: District Court of Maryland for Howard County Statement of Probable Cause,
10/17/15

Exhibit 7: Application for Reinstatement, 11/17/16

Exhibit 8: Investigative Report, 7/26/19

Exhibit 8A: Charges, 12/9/19

Exhibit 9: Notice of Hearing, 12/30/20 and USPS Delivery Confirmation, 1/6/21

Exhibit 10: Notice of Hearing, 12/30/20 and USPS Delivery Confirmation, 1/26/21

Exhibit 11: Electronic Notice of Hearing, 2/3/21

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board finds the following:

1. The Respondent was issued a license as a Licensed Master Social Worker (“LMSW”) by the Board on June 29, 2010. The Respondent’s license was set to expire on October 31, 2020.
2. The Respondent worked as a full-time therapist for a social services agency¹ (the “Agency”) that deals with clients who have severe mental illnesses, as well as a history of repeated hospitalizations in behavioral health units and outpatient treatment facilities in the upper Chesapeake Bay area.
3. On August 17, 2018 at 7:35 a.m., the Respondent e-mailed the Agency managers a copy of a typed letter of resignation, for the purpose of resigning from employment at the Agency.
4. In the resignation letter, the Respondent admitted that she “continued to be out of compliance with contact notes” and that she did not terminate services with her

¹ The name of the social services agency is not listed to maintain confidentiality.

clients properly by stating, “I hate to leave like this and not be able to terminate properly with my clients”.

5. On December 3, 2018, the Board received a Complaint signed by the Agency’s Program Director.
6. The Complaint alleged that the Respondent abruptly resigned without notice and without transitioning clients assigned to her caseload.
7. The Respondent abandoned a total of 41 clients who were assigned to her caseload.
8. The Respondent had difficulties with doing treatment plans and keeping up with basic documentation such as contact notes, which documented her meetings with clients on her caseload.
9. The day before the Respondent resigned she was assigned coverage for emergency phone calls to the Agency. In the middle of the night, the Respondent received a call from a client who was experiencing suicidal thoughts with a plan. The Respondent contacted her supervisor and they both continuously tried to reach the client unsuccessfully.
10. The Agency did not have coverage for emergency phone calls after the Respondent resigned.
11. One of the Respondent’s clients reported that she made comments to the client about her supervisor, told the client that she intended to “quit”, threatened to assault a co-worker and she called that co-worker a cuss word.

12. After the Respondent resigned, that client was much less receptive to receiving assistance with medications and doctors' appointments from the Agency.
13. The Board's investigation revealed that the Respondent had been arrested and charged with assault, second degree and did not report it to the Board. She was granted probation before judgment on December 16, 2015. She completed the terms of her probation satisfactorily on December 16, 2016.
14. On November 11, 2016 the Respondent filed for reinstatement of her social work license.
15. The Respondent answered "No" to question Number 4 on the reinstatement application which states, "Have you pled guilty to, nolo contendere to, been convicted of, or received probation before judgment for any criminal excluding misdemeanor traffic violations (Misdemeanor traffic violations include driving while under the influence of alcohol or while impaired by a drug, or a combination of drugs and, therefore, do not need to be reported to the Board.)"
16. The Board notified the Respondent of the Complaint it received concerning her license to practice social work.
17. The Board was not successful in obtaining the Respondent's participation in the Board's investigation of the Compliant.
18. The Board utilized first class mail, return receipt, telephone and email to contact the Respondent.
19. The Board confirmed the Respondent's receipt of Board subpoenas and notices.

20. The Respondent did not respond to any of the Boards subpoenas, communications or other requests.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that a preponderance of the evidence in the records shows that the Respondent violated Health Occ. § 19-311 (4), (6), (7), (12) and (16) as well as COMAR 10.42.03.03 A (3) - (5).

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this **22nd** day of **March**, 2021, by a majority of the quorum of the Board considering this case hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent, Crystal Johnson, LMSW, License Number 16137, is hereby **REVOKED**; and it is further

ORDERED that this Final Order is considered a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Gen. Provisions, §§ 4-101 *et seq.* (2014) and is reportable to any entity to whom the Board is obligated to report.²

03/22/2021



Date

Gerard Farrell, Chair
Board of Social Work Examiners

² This includes the Board's public website and NPDB.