

IN THE MATTER OF \* BEFORE THE MARYLAND  
LONNY A. SAMUELS, LCSW-C \* STATE BOARD OF  
RESPONDENT \* SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS  
License Number: 11254 \* Case Number: 2017-2372

\* \* \* \* \*

CONSENT ORDER

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) charged **Lonny A. Samuels**, Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (**LCSW-C**), (the “Respondent”), **License Number 11254**, with violating various provisions of the Maryland Social Workers Act (the “Act”), codified at Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. and 2018 Supp.).

The pertinent provisions of the Act provide the following:

§ 19-311. Grounds for license denials, discipline

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:

.....

- (5) Engages in a course of conduct that is inconsistent with generally accepted professional standards in the practice of social work;
  
- (6) Violates any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board;

The pertinent provisions of Md. Code Regs. (“COMAR”), provide the following:

COMAR 10.42.03.02. Definitions.

- A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.
- B. Terms Defined.  
...
  - (3) “Dual relationship” means a relationship in which a licensee is involved with a client professionally and in any other capacity.

COMAR 10.42.03.05 Relationships.

- A. The licensee may not enter into a dual relationship with a client or an individual with whom the client has a close personal relationship.

COMAR 10.42.03.06. Standards of Practice.

- ...
  - B. A licensee may not:
    - ...
      - (2) Engage in other relationships that could limit the licensee’s objectivity or create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

On June 6, 2020, the parties appeared at a Case Resolution Conference (“CRC”) before a committee of the Board. The Respondent was represented by counsel, Kevin Dunne, Esquire, and the Administrative Prosecutor assigned to the case participated in the CRC. 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 that:

**Background**

1. At all times relevant, the Respondent was and is licensed to practice clinical social work in the State of Maryland. On or about September 20, 2001, the Respondent was initially licensed to practice as an LCSW-C in the State of Maryland under license number 11254. The Respondent's LCSW-C license is current through October 31, 2021.

2. In April 2006, the Respondent began employment with a health insurance company ("Employer A") as a Case Manager. As a Case Manager, the Respondent provided social work services to various clients. The Respondent resigned his employment at Employer A on May 19, 2017.

3. On or about June 12, 2017, the Respondent began full-time employment as a Clinical Manager for a professional association that provided resources and advocates for physicians ("Employer B"). On or about February 1, 2018, the Respondent resigned his position at Employer B for "personal reasons."

**Complaint**

4. On or about June 26, 2017, the Board received a complaint (the "Complaint") from a social worker from the Baltimore County Department of Social Services (the "Complainant"). The Complaint alleged the following:

On May 30, 2017, Baltimore County Department of Social Services received a referral for a client. The referral was made to Adult Protective

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

Services by a bank that was concerned that the client was being exploited by Lonny Samuels. Mr. Samuels it was alleged was attempting to deposit two checks written to the client in his personal account, stating that the client was unable to manage his own funds. Upon further investigation, Mr. Samuels reported that he had known the client for five years or more when he first began working with him while employed by another company. According to the bank, Mr. Samuels did not have the proper paperwork to indicate that he was the power of attorney. The client suffers from traumatic brain injury and has no other family members to assist him. Also, Mr. Samuels reported to us that he has been regularly taking the client to his doctor's appointments and that has not been true. The relationship appears to be a conflict of interest.

5. Based on the Complaint, the Board began an investigation.

**Investigation**

6. On or about April 2, 2018, in furtherance of its investigation, the Board obtained the records from the bank ("Bank A") through the Maryland Office of the Attorney General Department of Human Services.

7. According to the Bank A records, the following events occurred:
  - a. On May 15, 2017, the Respondent opened a bank account ("Respondent's Account") with Bank A online.
  - b. Three days later, on May 18, 2017, the Respondent and the Client went to a Bank A branch ("the Branch") in Baltimore County, Maryland to add the Patient's name to the Respondent's Account as a beneficiary.
  - c. The Respondent told Bank A that he was the Client's caretaker and a Maryland Social Worker but that he was quitting his job soon.
  - d. The Respondent told Bank A that he was planning on depositing the Client's checks into the Respondent's Account because the Client could not show assets over a certain dollar amount in the Client's own account.

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

- e. On May 26, 2017, the Respondent and the Client went back to the Branch to deposit two settlement checks totaling \$50,899.16 into the Respondent's Account. Both checks were payable to the Client.
  - f. The Branch Manager spoke to the Respondent that day, while the Client sat next to the Respondent.
  - g. The Respondent presented no fiduciary documentation to act on the Client's behalf.
  - h. The Respondent told the Branch Manager that he could call the attorney who issued the settlement checks to verify the relationship and legitimacy of the transaction.
  - i. The Respondent then suggested that he open a joint account to expedite the deposit, which the Bank Manager refused.
8. On or about May 30, 2017, the Complainant initiated an investigation based on the report from Bank A regarding the Respondent's attempt to deposit the Client's two checks into the Respondent's Account.
9. According to the Complainant's Adult Services Plan, the Client "has a traumatic brain injury"; "does not read or write well"; and, "is not seeing a doctor on a regular basis."
10. On May 9, 2019, the Respondent provided the Board with a sworn Affidavit which included the following statements:

- ....
2. I am a licensed social worker in Maryland and have been license as a LCSWC since 2001
  3. I met [the Client] when I was assigned his case by my then employer, [Employer A]. [The Client] appeared to be over utilizing medical services and I was asked to assist [the Client]. I was asked to develop a treatment plan for [the Client] by [Employer A]. I learned that [the Client] had

CONSENT ORDER

Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

multiple problems, including a history of alcoholism; he had a history of difficulties with other residents when living in group homes; he had a history of homelessness; he had a history of difficulty managing money and his personal finances.

4. I attempted to assist [the Client] by finding him a permanent residence and assisted him in obtaining and visiting with medical specialists to treat his medical problems.

11. On May 17, 2019, the Respondent was interviewed by the Board's investigator ("Investigator"). The Respondent told the Investigator the following:

- a. He provided case management services to the Client when he worked for Employer A between 2012 and 2017. He was assigned to the Client because the Client had a high use of medical dollars and the Respondent's goal was to keep the medical expenses down. He would go to the Client's house and make sure the Client's medical needs were being served properly by making sure he had the right medicine and was being seen by the right doctors. He acknowledged that as the Client's case manager, his relationship with the Client was "therapeutic."
- b. After he left his employment with Employer A, he said he continued to help the Client "on a professional level – a personal level...as he had no other resources and he basically could have died...I took it upon myself to help him...because he [*sic*], the resources that we tried to get for him were not working."
- c. He said the first time he conducted any financial business on behalf of the Client was when he went to Bank A to attempt to deposit the two settlement checks (on May 18, 2017) so that the Client could purchase a house. Later in the interview, the Respondent said that the reason he was handling the settlement checks was because the Client had asked him to manage his money for him.
- d. He admitted that he opened the bank account at Bank A, at the Client's request, in the Respondent's name to deposit the Client's two checks which totaled approximately \$53,000. The Respondent admitted that in order to open the bank account, he told Bank A that he was the Client's social worker.

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

- e. The Respondent also wrote the financial power of attorney that he presented to Bank A the first time he went to Bank A. He admitted he did not know how to write a power of attorney and pulled a template off the internet. The financial power of attorney was revoked by the Client because "there was no reason for it" after Bank A would not accept the deposit. The Respondent said he is not the Client's legal guardian.
- f. When he attempted to deposit the checks, he gave his driver's license and a copy of his social work license to Bank A to prove that he was not trying to take advantage of the Client. When the bank manager refused the transaction, the lawyers told him the best thing to do was to put the checks back into escrow.
- g. At the time the Complainant was investigating him, he was "done" with Employer A and "we were done our social work" and he was working with the Client as a "friend" and helped him manage his money and make sure he was safe.
- h. After he talked to the Complainant and the settlement money was returned to the lawyers (and held in escrow), the Respondent said he was "cleared of the case."
- i. The Respondent denied having possession of any of the money at any time and that the money went from the law firm to the real estate agents. The Respondent said he did what the Complainant and APS requested and had the attorneys be in charge of the money.
- j. The Respondent denied receiving any type of benefits from the Client or anyone representing the Client. However, later in the interview, the Respondent admitted that the law firm representing the Client paid him money as "repayment" because he had loaned the Client money when the Client lived in a hotel. He did not have any receipts for the amounts he had loaned the Client.
- k. The Respondent said that the repayment check from the law firm was \$2,500. The Respondent also said that he could not remember why he received a second check dated June 7, 2017 from the law firm in the amount of \$1,671.91.

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

- l. The Respondent stated that at the time the house in Quantico, Maryland was purchased, the Client was able to conduct financial business on his own without assistance and the Respondent "was just on an advisory level." However, since purchasing the house, the Social Security Administration determined that the Client needs assistance; therefore, the Respondent now operates as the Client's representative payee for the Client's social security payments.
- m. The Respondent said that he has a personal representative bank account (PR account) in his name (the Respondent's name) in which the Client's SSI checks are deposited. The Client receives approximately \$760 a month (deposited into the Respondent's PR Account). The Respondent said he set up automatic withdrawals for the Client's bills to be debited directly from that account and the Respondent then transfers a \$500 allowance to the Client's personal account so the Client can do what he wants with it. Client
- n. The Respondent admitted that he had a dual relationship with the Client because he was "his social worker and his friend."

**CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent violated:

Health Occ. § 19-311. Grounds for license denials, discipline

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:

- (5) Engages in a course of conduct that is inconsistent with generally accepted professional standards in the practice of social work;
- (6) Violates any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board;



COMAR 10.42.03.02 Definitions.

- A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.
- B. Terms Defined.
- ...
- (3) "Dual relationship" means a relationship in which a licensee is involved with a client professionally and in any other capacity.

COMAR 10.42.03.05 Relationships.

- A. The licensee may not enter into a dual relationship with a client or an individual with whom the client has a close personal relationship.

COMAR 10.42.03.06. Standards of Practice.

- ...
- B. A licensee may not:
  - ...
  - (2) Engage in other relationships that could limit the licensee's objectivity or create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

**ORDER**

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 14 day of August, 2020, by a majority of the quorum of the Board considering this case hereby:

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

**ORDERED** that the Respondent's license to practice social work shall be **SUSPENDED** for a period of at least **EIGHTEEN MONTHS** all eighteen months stayed beginning on the effective date of this Consent Order;

**ORDERED** that during the period of suspension, the Respondent shall ensure a court appointed guardian of person and property is designated for the Client;

**ORDERED** that during the period of suspension, the Respondent shall enroll in and successfully complete a Board-approved, one-on-one, ethics tutorial, equivalent to at least twelve (12) continuing education credits, focusing on the issues that gave rise to this case, **dual relationships and patient-therapist boundaries**. After the successful completion of the ethics tutorial, the instructor shall provide the Board with a written report detailing the Respondent's participation in and completion of the course. The Respondent shall also submit a written statement to the Board stating what he has learned from the ethics tutorial; and it is further

**ORDERED** that within **EIGHTEEN MONTHS** of the effective date of this order the Respondent must provide to the Board written documentation from the a **Maryland Circuit Court, appointing a guardian of person and a guardian of property on behalf of the Client** and be it further

**ORDERED** that no earlier than **EIGHTEEN MONTHS** from the effective date of this Consent Order, the Respondent may submit a written petition to the Board requesting termination of the suspension of his license. The Board shall, in its discretion, grant the termination of the suspension and reinstatement of the Respondent's license if

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

the Respondent fully and satisfactorily complied with all of the terms and conditions of his suspension; 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 his 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 lifting the Stay and imposing the full Suspension of the Respondent's license or any additional 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 Respondent shall not serve or continue to serve as: a Board authorized sponsor and/or trainer of social work continuing education learning activities, an ethics tutor, an evaluator for the Board, or a Board-approved supervisor for a period of five (5) years for the effective date of this Consent Order; and it is further

**ORDERED** that this Consent Order will be posted on the Board's website and reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank ("NPDB"); and it is further

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

**ORDERED** that the for the public disclosure, this Consent Order is considered a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. §§ 4-101 *et seq.* (2014) and is reportable to any entity to who the Board is obligated to report.<sup>1</sup>

08/14/2020



\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gerard Farrell, Board Chair  
State Board of Social Work Examiners

<sup>1</sup> This includes the Board's public website and NPDB.

CONSENT ORDER

Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

CONSENT

I, Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C, License No. 11254, by affixing my signature hereto, acknowledge that:

1. I have had an opportunity to consult with counsel in this matter, before signing this document. I have knowingly and voluntarily agreed to enter 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 (2014 Repl. Vol. and 2018 Supp.) and Md. Code Ann., State Gov't, §§ 10-201 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. and 2017 Supp.).
3. I acknowledge the validity and enforceability of this Consent Order as if entered into after the conclusion 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 protections as provided by law. I am waiving those procedural and substantive protections.
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.

CONSENT ORDER

*Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C*

License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

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 by failing to abide by the conditions set forth in this Consent Order, I may be subject to disciplinary actions, which may include revocation of my license to practice as a social worker.
6. I sign this Consent Order voluntarily, without reservation, and I fully understand and comprehend the language, meaning and terms of this Consent Order.

07/06/2020  
Date

*Lonny A. Samuels*  
Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C

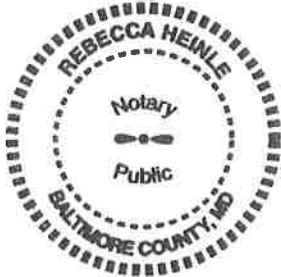
CONSENT ORDER  
Lonny A. Samuels, LCSW-C  
License Number: 11254, Case No.: 2017-2372

NOTARY

STATE OF Maryland  
COUNTY OF Baltimore

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 6<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2020, before me, a Notary Public of the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared **Lonny Samuels**, LCSW-C, License Number: 11254, and gave oath in due form of law that the foregoing Consent Order was his voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESS, my hand and Notary Seal.



Rebecca Heine  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: July 30, 2022