

IN THE MATTER OF \* BEFORE THE STATE BOARD  
SARAH SHREWSBURY, LCSW-C \* OF SOCIAL WORK  
License No. 16682 \* EXAMINERS  
Respondent \* Case No. 2019-2472  
\* \* \* \* \*

**FINAL CONSENT ORDER**

The State Board of Social Work Examiners (the "Board") charged SARAH SHREWSBURY, LCSW-C (the "Respondent"), with violation of certain provisions of Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 19-101, *et seq.*, (2014 Repl. Vol. and 2019 Supp.).

Specifically, the Board charged the Respondent with violation of the following provisions of § 19-311:

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;
- (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;
- (12) Falls to file or record any report as required by law, willfully impedes or obstructs the filing or recording of the report, or induces another to fail to file the report;
- (14) Falls to report suspected child abuse or neglect in violation of § 5-704 of the Family Law Article [;].

The Board further charged the Respondent with a violation of its Code of Ethics, COMAR 10.42.03:

**.01 Scope and Purpose.**

A. This chapter governs the professional conduct of social workers licensed by the Board regardless of whether the service delivery is in person, telephonically, or electronically.

B. The objective of this chapter is the protection of the public. The best interest of the public shall be the primary guide in determining the appropriate professional conduct of all individuals whose activities are regulated by the Board.

COMAR 10.42.08

**.06 Standards for Supervision.**

A. A supervisor shall:

- (3) Instruct and provide role modeling in the general content areas established in Health Occupations Article, §19-101(m), Annotated Code of Maryland; and
- (4) Ensure that a supervisee has read and is knowledgeable

- B. In addition to the requirements of §A of this regulation, the supervisor shall specifically instruct and provide guidance relating to the supervisee's scope of practice of social work under Health Occupations Article, §§19-301 and 19-307, Annotated Code of Maryland, including:

(7) Assessing the client for risk of imminent danger [;].

### FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board finds that:

#### BACKGROUND

1. At all times relevant to the charges herein, the Respondent was licensed to practice Licensed Certified Social Work-Clinical (LCSW-C) in the State of Maryland. The Respondent was first so licensed on December 6, 2017 and her license expires on October 31, 2021. (The Respondent obtained her original social work license in 2011.)
2. At all times relevant herein, the Respondent worked as a full-time Supervisor at a County Department of Social Services in the Family Services Division in northeastern Maryland.

#### COMPLAINT

3. On April 3, 2018, the Board received a Complaint (the "Complaint") from the Director of the Department of Human Services (Complainant) of a neighboring County's Department of Social Services informing the Board that the Respondent had failed to report to appropriate licensing authorities or employers of school staff or law enforcement when there were substantial grounds to believe suspected child abuse or neglect under Family Law Article § 5-705.4. The Complaint alleged, *inter alia*, the following:

- A. On February 26, 2018, the neighboring County's Department of Social Services for which the Complainant was the Director, received a request from the Department of Social Services where the Respondent was employed to investigate a report of child neglect concerning three children, ages 12, 10 and 6;
- B. That neighboring County's Department accepted the request and immediately began investigating the allegations and opened an investigation of physical abuse based on additional information;
- C. During the investigation, that County Department received credible information that the Respondent had reason to believe that child abuse or neglect had occurred but failed to make a report to a local department of social services or law enforcement, as required by statute, within 48 hours.

#### BOARD INVESTIGATION

4. As a result of the Complaint, the Board began an investigation, which resulted in the following additional information:
5. A Social Worker under the Respondent's supervision was assigned to

in the kitchen talking to the foster mother who was observing the adopted son through a video monitor. The adopted son was in the bathtub naked eating a carrot while his mother was observing him and yelling at him periodically to "turn around." The Supervisee further observed that a second adopted child was throwing up all morning and "looking bad, hygiene wise."

6. The Respondent directed the Supervisee to file a referral to law enforcement of abuse or neglect. A week or two later, the Respondent followed up with the Supervisee in regard to the referral and learned that the referral had not been made. Even though the Supervisee had not made the referral, the Respondent was required to do so.

7. On March 22, 2018, police received a report of a young child walking along a roadway at 12:05 a.m. Upon investigation it was determined that it was the adopted child who had been the subject of the referral for abuse or neglect that had not been made on or about May 24, 2017.

8. When the adoptive mother was contacted 11 hours later, she insisted that the child was in his room. Upon checking the room, it was found to be in "extreme disarray." The bed was encased by walls with a homemade wooden enclosure. It was determined that the three adopted children and the two foster children would all be safely placed out of the house pending the outcome of the investigation.

9. When the adoptive father returned home after being notified, he indicated that the front door was open when he left for work at 4:00 am, but he did not check on any of the children, including an adopted girl whose "bedroom" was in the parents' bedroom closet.

10. Upon removal, the children were interviewed where they revealed that, at times, they were tied to the kitchen table and forced to eat, having a cup tied to their hands until they drank all of the formula in the cup; forced to stand or sleep in the shower for misbehaving; beaten with a piece of wood; and were locked in a closet for unknown amounts of time.

11. On February 27, 2018, a Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) hearing was held and the two foster and three adopted children were found to need assistance and would not be returned to the custody of the foster/adoptive parents.

12. Because numerous home visits had been conducted by the Department that employed the Respondent, the investigation was transferred to the neighboring County Department.

13. On October 11, 2019, the adoptive mother was found guilty of rendering a child in need of assistance and contributing to CINA, two counts. On that same date, the adoptive father was found guilty of two counts of neglect of a minor and two counts of contributing to a child in need of assistance. Both have filed appeals to the Court of Special Appeals as of February 2020.

14. As set forth above, by failing to ensure that a report of suspected abuse or neglect was filed with the proper authorities involving vulnerable children under the care of the social workers she supervised, the Respondent committed an act of misconduct in the practice of social work, in violation of §19-311 (4) (commits any act of ... misconduct in the practice of social work); (5) (Engages in a course of conduct that is inconsistent with generally accepted professional standards in the practice of social work); (12) (Fails to file or record any report as required by law, willfully impedes or obstructs the filing or recording of the report, or induces another to fail to file the report); and, (14) (Fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect in violation of § 5-704 of the Family Law Article).

15. As set forth above, failing to properly supervise the social workers under her direction in ensuring that an abuse/neglect report was filed, the Respondent violated the following: (6) (Violates any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board) by violating the following provisions of COMAR 10.42.03.01A. and B. and, COMAR 10.42.08.06 A. (3) and (4), and B. (7).

violated the Board's Act and regulations, pursuant to §§ 19-311 (4), (5), (6), (12) and (14) of the Act, and COMAR 10.42.03.01A. and B. and, COMAR 10.42.08.06 A. (3) and (4), and B. (7).

**ORDER**

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 12<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2021, by a majority of the Board hereby:

**ORDERED** that Respondent's license is placed on PROBATION for a period of **THREE (3) YEARS**, during the first year of which, the Respondent shall take and pass a Board-pre-approved course in mandatory reporting, which shall not count towards her Continuing Educations Units (CEUs) requirements;

**ORDERED** that Respondent shall bear all costs of complying with this Order. and it is further

**ORDERED** that the effective date of this Order is the date that it is signed by the Board;

**ORDERED** that Respondent shall obey all laws and regulations that govern the practice of social work in the State of Maryland.

**ORDERED** that the Respondent shall not serve or continue to serve as a Board Authorized Sponsor, presenter 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 5 years from the effective date of this Consent Order; and it is further

**ORDERED** that, should the Board receive information that the Respondent has violated the Act or if the Respondent violates any conditions of this Order, after providing the Respondent with notice and an opportunity for a hearing, the Board may take further disciplinary action against the Respondent, including suspension or revocation. The burden of proof for any action brought against the Respondent as a result of a breach of the conditions of the Order shall be on the Respondent to demonstrate compliance with the Order or conditions; and it is further

**ORDERED** that, for purposes of public disclosure and, as permitted by Md. General Provisions §§ 4-101 *et seq.* (2014 Vol. and 2019 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.

3/12/2021  
Date

Gerard Farrell

Gerard Farrell, Board Chair  
Board of Social Work Examiners

**CONSENT OF SARAH SHREWSBURY, LCSW-C**

I, SARAH SHREWSBURY, LCSW-C, Respondent, by affixing my signature hereto, acknowledge that:

1. I am represented by an attorney, Wilbur W. Bolton, and have been advised by him prior to signing this Consent Order;

2. I am aware that without my consent, my license to practice as a LCSW-C in this State cannot be limited except pursuant to the provisions of § 19-312 of the Act and the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), Md. Code Ann., State Gov't. §§10-201, *et seq.*, (2014 Repl. Vol and 2019 Supp.).

Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order, provided the Board adopts the foregoing Consent Order in its entirety. By doing so, I waive my right to a formal hearing as set forth in § 19-312 of the Act and §§10-201, *et seq.*, of the APA, and any right to appeal as set forth in § 19-313 of the Act and §§10-201, *et seq.*, of the APA. I acknowledge that my failure to abide by the conditions set forth in this Order and following proper procedures, I may suffer disciplinary action, possibly including revocation, against my license to practice as a LCSW-C in the State of Maryland

Read and Approved by:

W. Bolton  
Wilbur W. Bolton, Esquire  
Attorney for Respondent

3/11/2021  
Date

[Signature]  
Sarah Shrewsbury, LCSW-C

STATE OF Maryland :  
CITY/COUNTY OF Ch :

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 11 day of MARCH, 2021, before me, a Notary Public of the foregoing State and (City/County), personally appeared SARAH SHREWSBURY, LCSW-C, and made oath in due form of law that signing the foregoing Consent Order was her voluntary act and deed, and the statements made herein are true and correct.

AS WITNESSETH my hand and notarial seal

[Signature]  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 3/6/2023

