

<p><b>IN THE MATTER OF</b></p> <p><b>CHRISTOPHER J. METZ, LCPC</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>Respondent</b></p> <p><b>License Number: LC9881</b></p>	<p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p>	<p><b>BEFORE THE MARYLAND STATE</b></p> <p><b>BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL</b></p> <p><b>COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS</b></p> <p><b>Case Number: 2022-006</b></p>
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**FINAL ORDER**

On or about October 15, 2021, the Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the “Board”) notified **CHRISTOPHER J. METZ, LCPC** (Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor) (the “Respondent”), license number LC9881, of its intent to **REVOKE** his LCPC license based on violations of the Maryland Professional Counselors and Therapists Act, codified at Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 17-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. & 2020 Supp.) (the “Act”) and the regulations adopted by the Board under the Code of Maryland Regulations (“COMAR”).

The Board based its intent on the following provisions of the Act and the regulations adopted by the Board:

**§ 17-509. Denial, probation, suspension or revocation 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) and (13), shown above, the Board also bases its action 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 counselor’s 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 the welfare of clients, employees, employers, or the public;

B. Dual Relationships.

(1) A counselor shall:

- (a) Avoid dual relationships with clients[.]

**COMAR 10.58.03.09**

- A. A counselor may not engage in sexual misconduct with a client or supervisee. Sexual misconduct includes but is not limited to:
  - (1) Inappropriate sexual language;
  - (2) Sexual exploitation;
  - (3) Sexual harassment;
  - (4) Sexual behavior;
- B. Concurrent Sexual Relationships. A counselor may not engage in either consensual or forced sexual behavior with:
  - (1) A client;
- 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.
- E. Sexual Harassment.
  - (1) A counselor may not sexually harass a:
    - (a) Client[.]

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Board finds the following facts:

**Background**

1. At all times relevant, the Respondent was licensed to practice clinical professional counseling in the State of Maryland. The Respondent originally was licensed by the Board to practice as a LCPC in the State of Maryland on September 19, 2019 under

License Number LC9881. The Respondent's license is current and is scheduled to expire on January 31, 2023.

### **The Complaint**

2. On or about July 20, 2021, the Board received a complaint from a woman (the "Complainant") alleging that while she was a client at a counseling facility (the "Facility") in Baltimore County, Maryland where the Respondent worked as a therapist, she and the Respondent engaged in a romantic relationship. Based on the Complaint, the Board opened an investigation of the Respondent.

### **The Board Investigation**

3. In furtherance of its investigation, Board staff interviewed the Respondent and the Complainant. Board staff also subpoenaed and reviewed numerous documents including text messages and photographs, text and telephone logs, video files, personnel records of the Respondent, and treatment records of the Complainant.

4. The Board's investigation revealed that in January, 2020, the Complainant began receiving treatment for an eating disorder at the Facility where the Respondent led counseling groups she attended. The Complainant was enrolled in a partial hospital program and attended treatment programs in-person during the day.

5. Personnel files reveal that the Respondent was employed as a Primary Therapist at the Facility from January, 2020 until July, 2020.

6. Records from the Facility reflect that the Respondent had at least 17 documented treatment encounters with the Complainant from January, 2020 through June,

2020, when the Complainant ended her treatment at the Facility. From January, 2020 to March, 2020, these treatment encounters with the Respondent included in-person group counseling sessions and individual meal support. Often, the Complainant was the only person attending a group counseling session led by the Respondent. Beginning in April, 2020, these documented encounters included one-on-one virtual treatment sessions when the Respondent was assigned as her therapist. These virtual counseling sessions occurred two-to-three times per week.

7. The Complainant reported in March, 2020, that she and the Respondent began a romantic relationship. The Respondent admits he had a romantic and sexual relationship with the Complainant beginning in April, 2020. This included sexual touching, oral sex and intercourse on multiple occasions while the Complainant was a patient at the Facility. The Respondent admitted in his interview that he “early on” recognized he “was not practicing adequate and really ethical counseling....”

8. The Respondent admits that starting April 1, 2020, he and the Complainant communicated almost daily by cell phone outside of therapy sessions. Text message logs between March 21, 2020 and November 20, 2020, showed over 75,000 text messages were exchanged between the Respondent and Complainant.

9. The Respondent and Complainant also exchanged nude photographs and graphic text messages. The Respondent admits to requesting the Complainant to send him nude photographs.

10. Video files show the Respondent and Complainant kissing. The Board investigation also revealed the Respondent recorded and shared a romantic song via Google Drive with the Complainant.

11. The Complainant reported that the Respondent stressed to her that their relationship needed to remain a secret.

12. The Respondent and Complainant met multiple times outside of the Facility, including at a park, a beach, a restaurant, and a gym. The Respondent claims the relationship lasted until August, 2020.

13. In his Board interview, the Respondent admitted “there’s no justifiable explanation for any of this,...I am aware that it was not appropriate and I feel comfortable saying it....” The Respondent further admitted that he knew “that this is something that...should not have and cannot happen in the future....[and] I don’t know how I can, how I can even excuse myself given the circumstances.” The Respondent also stated, “I know that what I did was wrong....” The Respondent described his actions as “super unethical and inexcusable.”

14. Since August, 2020, the Respondent stated he works as a Clinical Director and therapist at a counseling facility located in Frederick County, Maryland. Despite not being a Board-approved supervisor by the State of Maryland, the Respondent acknowledged he supervises a Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor. This accounts for twenty-five (25%) of his professional time.

## CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent's conduct, as described above, constitutes violations of the above-cited provisions of the Act and the regulations adopted by the Board.

## ORDER

Based on the foregoing, it is this 18 day of March, 2022, by the Board hereby:

**ORDERED** that the Respondent's license to practice clinical professional counseling, license number LC9881, is hereby **REVOKED**; and it is further

**ORDERED** that upon service of this Order, the Respondent shall immediately surrender to the Board all indicia of licensure from the Board that are in his possession, including but not limited to the original certificate and/or renewal certificates; and it is further

**ORDERED** that this document constitutes an Order of the Board and is therefore a public document for purposes of public disclosure, as required by Md. Code Ann., General Provisions, §§ 4-101 through 4-601 (Repl. Vol. 2014).

## NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

Pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 17-512(b), the Respondent has the right to take a direct judicial appeal. Any appeal shall be filed within thirty (30) days from the date of this Final Order and shall be made as provided for judicial review of a final decision in the Maryland Administrative Procedure Act, Md. Code Ann., State Gov't II § 10-222; and Title 7, Chapter 200 of the Maryland Rules of Procedure.

If the Respondent files an appeal, the Board is a party and should be served with the court's process at the following address:

Tony W. Torain, J.D., D.Min., Executive Director  
Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists  
4201 Patterson Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215-2299  
Phone: 410-764-4732  
Fax: 410-358-1610

At that point, the Administrative Prosecutor is no longer a party to this case and need not be served or copied.

03/18/2022

Date



Mary N. Drotleff, M.S., LCMFT

Chairperson

Maryland State Board of Professional  
Counselors and Therapists