

IN THE MATTER OF

JESSICA GRIMES-MEERDTER,

LCSW-C

License No. 15658

Respondent

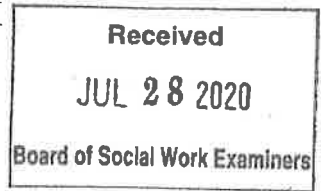
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BEFORE THE STATE BOARD

OF SOCIAL WORK

EXAMINERS

Case No. 2019-2618



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FINAL CONSENT ORDER

The State Board of Social Work Examiners (the "Board") charged **JESSICA GRIMES-MEERDTER, 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;
- (11) Makes or files a false report or record in the practice of social work[.]

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 10.42.03.:

.06 Standards of Practice.

- C. 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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board finds that:

BACKGROUND

- 1. At all times relevant to the charges herein, the Respondent was licensed to practice Licensed Clinical Social Work (LCSW-C) in the State of Maryland. The

Respondent was first so licensed on December 11, 2009 and her license expires on October 31, 2021.

2. At all times relevant herein, the Respondent worked as a full-time Supervisor at a Child Protective Investigative Division of a Central Maryland-area Department of Social Services agency.

COMPLAINT

3. On March 7, 2019, the Board received a Complaint from the Deputy Director of the Office of Licensing and Monitoring for the Department of Health. The Complaint detailed the following, *inter alia*:

- A. Several of the Respondent's supervisees were able to determine that the Respondent had not renewed her license timely and that she had not completed the required ethics portion of the required Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for the 2017 renewal;
- B. Rather, the Respondent requested that one of her supervisees who had attended the ethics training provide her certificate of attendance to the Respondent. The Respondent then obscured or "whited out" the supervisee's name and filled in her own (the Respondent's) name. She then took that altered/falsified ethics certificate to the Board, along with other documents to personally renew her license after the expiration date, in order that she could

obtain a license for the renewal period of November 2017-October 31, 2019.

BOARD INVESTIGATION

4. As a result of the Complaint, the Board began an investigation, which resulted in the following additional information:

5. The Board interviewed the Complainant, who disclosed that she received information from various employees and relayed the information to the Human Resources Department of the Division which began an investigation which confirmed that the Respondent falsified the certificate. The Respondent was then offered an opportunity to resign rather than be terminated from employment, which the Respondent accepted;

6. The Board's Investigator interviewed various supervisees who informed him that they were afraid to report the incident to personnel or to the Board once they realized what had occurred because they feared retaliation. They also confirmed that they did not see the Respondent at the training session. One indicated that she saw a certificate on the Respondent's desk with white out. Another discussed with the Respondent why the Respondent had not gone to the training session. They all discussed that it would be hard to forge the trainer's signature of each attendee's name. The training attendance sheet was obtained, and the Respondent's name was not on it. In addition, the Respondent had signed out for leave on the date that the training was given at the Respondent's workplace.

7. The Respondent claimed that she had attended part of the training session but never signed in. She admitted whitening out the supervisee's name, substituting her own name, and submitting the falsified certificate to the Board as her own.

8. By falsifying an official document needed for licensure renewal and, by submitting that falsified document for renewing her license, 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); and, (11) (made a false report in the practice of social work).

9. As set forth above, by taking a document from a supervisee and falsifying it, the Respondent is in violation of COMAR 10.42.03.06 (Standards of Practice. 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.)

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes that the Respondent violated Board's Act and regulations, pursuant to §§ 19-311 (4), (5),(6) and (11) of the Act, and COMAR 10.42.03.01 A. and B; and, COMAR 10.42.03.06.C. (2).

ORDER

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

ORDERED that Respondent's license is SUSPENDED for one year:

1. During the Suspension, the Respondent shall take a one-on-one 12-hour, Board pre-approved ethics tutorial;
2. The Respondent's 2019 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) shall be audited. The Respondent shall submit the CEUs to the Board within the first month of the effective date of the Consent Order.

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, 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 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, for purposes of public disclosure and, as permitted by Md. General Provisions §§ 4-101 et seq. (2014 Vo.. 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.

08/26/2020

Date



Gerard Farrell, Board Chair
Board of Social Work Examiners

CONSENT OF JESSICA GRIMES-MEERDTER, LCSW-C, RESPONDENT

I, **JESSICA GRIMES-MEERDTER, LCSW-C, Respondent**, by affixing my signature hereto, acknowledge that:

1. I am not represented by an attorney and have knowingly and voluntarily waived my right to any attorney 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 Govt.. § §10-201, *et seq.*, (2014 Repl. Vol and 2019 Supp.).

3. I am aware that I am entitled to a formal evidentiary hearing before the Board.

By this Consent Order, I hereby consent and admit to the foregoing Findings of 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.

7/22/20

Date

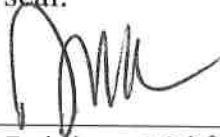
Jessica Grimes-Meerdter, LCSW-C
JESSICA GRIMES-MEERDTER, LCSW-C

STATE OF MARYLAND

CITY/COUNTY OF Carroll :

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 22 day of July, 2020,
before me, Joann M. Klasmeier, a Notary Public of the foregoing State and
(Print Name)
(City/County), personally appeared **JESSICA GRIMES-MEERDTER, 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.



Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 10/1/22

