

FILED WITH THE BOARD OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS
ON July 2, 2007

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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS

IN THE MATTER OF THE SUSPENSION
OR REVOCATION OF THE LICENSE OF

Administrative Action

IRIT FELSEN, PH.D.
License No. 35S100375600

CONSENT ORDER

TO PRACTICE PSYCHOLOGY IN
THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

This matter was opened to the New Jersey State Board of Psychological Examiners (hereinafter "the Board") upon receipt of information alleging that Dr. Felsen (the Respondent) engaged in unprofessional and unethical activity because the Respondent who was the therapist of R.Z., had a personal relationship with the patient's husband, J.P. The Respondent began therapy with R.Z. in October 2001 for issues relating to her marriage and for family issues. After about two years of therapy with R.Z. Respondent

agreed to see R.Z. with her husband, J.P. Sometime in April 2004 R.Z and J.P. attended a talk for Holocaust Remembrance Day which was give by the respondent at a local synagogue. J. P. spoke with the respondent after the lecture. In early 2005, J.P. began therapy with the Respondent. For a period of time, Respondent provided therapy treatment to both R. Z. and J. P.

J.P. provided information confirming that he met with Dr. Felsen when his wife initially started her therapy in a joint session, he later spoke to her at a lecture in April 2004 that Respondent gave at a local synagogue and sent a poem that he had written to the Respondent through his wife J.P. He recalls beginning therapy with Respondent in April 2005 after an incident of road rage. He reports telling the Respondent that he was in love with her in June during a session and that she responded by telling him that this was a common thing that occurs in therapy and they would work it out. On July 7, he and the respondent sat in his car and listened to a CD that he had purchased for her, as Dr. Felsen did not have a CD player in her office and held hands. Dr. Felsen recalls that he grabbed her hand, but she pushed his hand away. J.P. further claimed that Respondent called him from Israel during a vacation trip to inform him that she had arrived safely and that she was well. He discussed his separation anxiety that he experienced because she was away and they communicated by email frequently while she was in Israel. Respondent states that both R.Z. and J.P. were highly anxious during her trip to Israel, and that she called and emailed both of them at their request, in a therapeutic manner, to help them cope more efficiently while she was abroad. Respondent visited J.P. 's mother who resides in Israel. Respondent states that she frequently visits the parents of holocaust survivors, as they often are able to describe their experiences better than to their own

families, which becomes useful in treatment. Respondent accordingly visited JP's mother in Israel for this purpose, after discussing the idea with both JP and RZ and receiving their full support. He further testified that in therapy sessions he discussed his sleeping habits stating that he liked to sleep "very close" and he said, "me too." J.P. also claimed he hugged and kissed the respondent in therapy sessions. He also related that he arranged to meet the respondent and her two children at Barnes and Nobles. Respondent provided therapy to the complainant R.Z. from mid October 2001 until January 5, 2006 and that she also provided therapy to her husband, J.P. from April 2005 until November 2005. Respondent provided therapy to J.P. until September, 2005 when he and his wife separated. Respondent provided J.P. with the names of three therapists at the time that she referred him out of treatment. She saw him a few times after that, at his insistence to help in the termination process.

The Respondent appeared with her attorney, James Wulach, Esquire, at an investigative inquiry of the Board on October 3, 2006. Respondent confirmed that she provided couples therapy to R.Z. from October 2001 through January 5, 2006. She testified that she held a joint counseling session with J.P., the husband of R.Z. once during her counseling sessions with R.Z. but the session was unproductive because J.P. was extremely aggressive and it was not possible to work with him.

Respondent confirmed that she gave a presentation on the holocaust in West Orange, NJ. she met J.P. and R.Z. after the presentation. Respondent also asserted that she agreed to see J.P. in therapy because her patient R.Z. was having a difficult time and J.P. agreed to seek help only from the respondent.

Respondent further confirmed that she discussed transference issues with J.P. in the second month of therapy and she discouraged his feelings. It was her testimony that she discussed issues of transference with J.P. about every session. Respondent also stated that J.P. had difficulty believing that his feelings for her were not real. Respondent confirmed that at the end of June or the beginning of July she took a summer vacation with her children to Israel. She admitted that she called J.P. from Israel because he was having anxiety and depression. Respondent testified that J.P. lost weight, he could barely function at work and he was obsessing about their relationship. She also confirmed that she visited with J.P.'s mother who resides in Israel and that she did not bill the patient for her visit with his mother. She explained that she visited with his mother because she was a holocaust survivor.

She confirmed that J.P. kissed her on the lips on several occasions but Respondent described the kisses "as very gentle and in a nonintrusive way."(T23:11-15). Respondent testified that she ended her therapeutic relationship with J.P. when his wife made a decision to separate from him but she saw him in November 2005 because he called her with suicidal ideation. Despite her reservations about spending time with J.P., Respondent testified that she spent one last day with him and they had lunch, went to the movies and had dinner at Chez Catherine in Westfield, NJ. Respondent testified that she knew it was wrong in terms of boundaries to spend this day together but she was hoping to convince him to continue in therapy with another therapist. Respondent admitted that she recognized that she was blurring boundaries but she also testified that she considered J.P. only as a friend and that she told J.P. that she had a "happy marriage." She also testified that she sought consultation with her mentor and colleague, Dr. Laub at the end

of November 2005. She also saw Dr. Abelin-Sas, M.D., an analyst in New York City and at her recommendation respondent terminated treatment of both R.Z. and J.P. Respondent also confirmed that she began analysis with Dr. Ronald Zirin, Ph.D., in January 2006 and is currently dealing with her reaction to J.P. in her psychotherapy treatment with Dr. Zirin.

Having reviewed the entire record, it appears to the Board that respondent has committed boundary violations with patient J.P. and this conduct constitutes professional misconduct in violation of 45:1-21(e). Additionally, the Board found that the Respondent has recognized the breach of appropriate professional boundaries and has sought therapy to address these issues.

The respondent being desirous of resolving this matter without resort to formal proceedings, and the Board having determined that the following provisions are sufficiently protective of the public interest and welfare, and for good cause shown,

IT IS ON THIS *2nd* DAY OF *July* 2007

HEREBY ORDERED AND AGREED THAT:

1. Respondent's license to practice psychology shall be suspended for one year. The suspension of her license shall be stayed as long as respondent continues in psychotherapy for a minimum of one year and agrees to supervision in her practice for at

least a minimum of one year from the filing of this Consent Order as described further herein.

2. Respondent's practice shall be supervised for a minimum of one year. The supervisor shall be approved by the Board prior to being engaged by the Respondent and shall be a licensed psychologist in New Jersey. Respondent shall submit the names of three potential supervisors for approval by the Board. The approved supervisor shall report in writing to the Board on a monthly basis regarding the respondent's progress. The supervisor's report shall provide an informative evaluation of the respondent's patient treatment and professional practice. The supervisor shall pay particular attention to respondent's dealing with boundary issues and social and sexual relationships as well as respondent's overall practice. The cost of supervision is the sole responsibility of the respondent. The supervisor shall agree to immediately notify the Board of any actions by Respondent which fail to meet the acceptable standards of professional practice.

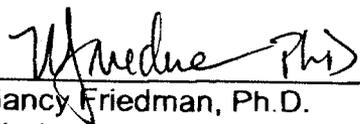
3. Respondent shall continue to participate in psychotherapy treatment during the entire period of stayed suspension and until further order of the Board. Respondent shall inform the Board in writing of the name of her therapist and shall remain in therapy for at least the complete period of stayed suspension. The therapist shall submit to the Board quarterly reports providing the dates of attendance in therapy and a statement that respondent is satisfactorily participating in the therapy process. The Board shall be informed immediately of any changes in supervision. At the completion of the period of stayed suspension, the therapist shall report to the Board in writing on the respondent's progress and the Board will access as to whether respondent shall continue in therapy.

4. Respondent shall reimburse to R.Z. the full amount of the fees for professional therapy services paid to respondent for the therapy provided simultaneously to J.P. which was approximately from April 7, 2005 through October 25, 2005. A copy of the check forwarded to the R.Z. shall be sent to the Board as proof of satisfaction of restitution.

5. Respondent shall pay for costs incurred by the Board for the investigation of this matter in the amount of Seven Hundred and Sixty five dollars (\$765.00). Payment in full shall be remitted to the attention of J. Michael Walker, Executive Director, State Board of Psychological Examiners, P.O. Box 45017, Newark, New Jersey 07101. Failure to submit the full amount of costs or restitution may result in the filing of a Certificate of Debt against the respondent in the Superior Court of New Jersey.

6. Failure to comply with any of the terms of this Consent Order shall constitute a violation of the Order which will constitute grounds for further disciplinary action as the Board may determine.

STATE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS



Nancy Friedman, Ph.D.
Chair

I have read and understand the within Consent Order and agree to be bound by its terms. Consent is hereby given to the Board to enter this Order.

FROM : James S. Wulach, Ph.D., J.D. PHONE NO. : 973 763 2088
Jun 25 07 02:53P BEN NESS PHOTO

Jun. 25 2007 09:38PM P10
212 253 2624 P. 1

FROM : James S. Wulach, Ph.D., J.D. PHONE NO. : 973 763 2088

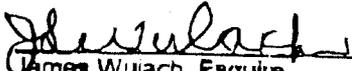
Jun. 14 2007 11:02AM P4



Irit Feisen, Ph.D.

DATED: 6/25/07

This Order is agreed to as to form
and entry.



James Wulach, Esquire
Attorney for Irit Feisen, Ph.D.

DATED: 6/25/07