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FILED WITH THE BOARD OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS
ON August 5, 2013

J. Michael Starker

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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

BETH A. GROSSHANS, Ph.D.
License No. 35S100360100

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 from Christopher Barbarack, Esquire that his client, Beth Grosshans, Ph.D. (the Respondent) engaged in unprofessional and unethical activity because she had a personal relationship with her patient A.D.¹

¹The patient's initials are fictitious to protect the identity of the patient.

Respondent appeared with her counsel, Christopher Barbarack, Esquire for an investigative inquiry on June 25, 2012.

The Respondent testified that she began therapy with A.D. regarding issues relating to symptoms of moderate anxiety on May 6, 2009 and ended on October 1, 2010.. The first twelve months of treatment Respondent provided individual psychotherapy and from July 2010 through September 2010 techniques of Intensive Short Term Dynamic Psychotherapy were added which increased the sessions from 90 to 120 minutes. Respondent testified that the therapeutic work with A.D. also focused also on professional stresses, family issues and a traumatic unprocessed childhood paternal loss. During the course of treatment A.D. developed and expressed loving feelings towards the Respondent.

Respondent testified that being an experienced psychologist she believed that she could handle the patient's feelings in the context of transference issues. She discussed transference with A.D. but she also testified that in this case unlike other cases where patients exhibited transference-counter-transference issues, she had similar loving feelings toward her patient, A.D. She further testified that she never expressed her feelings for A.D. during the treatment sessions and she was "very focused on maintaining a personal distance." She sought counsel from a longtime colleague and friend she considered a supervisor, a licensed social worker who Respondent has known for over 18 years. Respondent also began individual therapy with John Rathouser, Ph.D. The primary focus of Respondent 's therapy was her feelings for A.D. Her therapy sessions were sporadic as they were scheduled when needed. She also contacted her attorney to discuss the ramifications of her actions toward her licensure status. In September 2010 she advised A.D. that it was time to terminate the therapy and she gave him referrals to other therapists

should he wish to continue therapy. Respondent terminated therapy with A.D. in early October, 2010. Approximately seven months later Respondent was contacted by A.D. and she made a conscious decision to pursue the contact and develop a personal relationship with A.D. Respondent described her relationship with A.D. as "very intense and close and deeply intimate relationship that was not physical for quite a while." Respondent testified that at the time of the inquiry she had obtained a divorce and she was "sharing my life with this man." A.D. was also in the process of a divorce and had a signed divorce settlement but was tied up with "estate matters." Respondent choose to engage in this conduct despite receiving counsel to avoid such inappropriate behavior and her own "professional identity and respect for these boundaries."

Having reviewed the entire record, it appears to the Board that the Respondent has committed egregious boundary violations with patient, A.D., as she engaged in a personal intimate, sexual relationship with a former client with whom she rendered psychological services within the immediate preceding 24 months in violation of N.J.A.C. 13:42-10.9(b) which conduct constitutes professional misconduct in violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e).

Respondent has recognized the breach of appropriate professional boundaries and self reported them to the Board. Despite obtaining supervision and therapy, the Respondent made a conscious effort to violate her professional boundaries and regulatory obligations by pursuing a personal intimate, sexual relationship with a former patient only 7 months following termination of the therapy and without waiting the minimum 2 year time period provided by regulations and ethical codes. The steps taken by the Respondent in this matter including the supervision and therapy sought and her taking a leave of absence

from practice for one year appear as measures taken to reduce the impact of disciplinary action rather than to remediate the transference issues respondent experienced. Board finds that Respondent evidenced very little remorse for violating professional boundaries and put her personal feelings over her professional responsibilities.

The Respondent being desirous of resolving this matter without resort to formal proceedings, having waived any right to hearing 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 *5th* DAY OF *August* 2013

HEREBY ORDERED AND AGREED THAT:

1. Respondent's license to practice psychology shall be actively suspended for one year from the date of filing of the order, and until further order of the Board.
2. Respondent shall participate in psychotherapeutic treatment during the entire period of active suspension and until further order of the Board with a Board-approved psychotherapist to deal with boundary issues and transference and counter transference issues. Respondent shall submit the names and curriculum vitae of at least three therapists licensed in New Jersey for approval by the Board. Respondent shall remain in therapy during the complete period of active suspension and any period of active practice under supervision and until further order of the Board. The therapist shall submit to the Board quarterly reports providing the dates of attendance in therapy, a statement that

respondent is satisfactorily participating in the therapy process and reporting respondent's progress regarding boundary issues. The Board shall be informed immediately of any changes in therapist with a report from the therapist as to why therapy terminated. At the completion of the period of active suspension, the therapist shall report to the Board in writing on the respondent's progress and the Board will assess as to whether respondent shall continue in therapy.

3. Upon completion of one year of active suspension, Respondent may apply to the Board for reinstatement of her license to practice psychology. If reinstated, respondent shall practice under supervision for a minimum of one year and until further board order. Psychotherapy shall continue during the entire period of practice under supervision.

4. Upon any reinstatement of license, 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 acceptable standards of professional practice, or are violative fo the statutes, regulations and codes of ethics governing the practice of psychology.

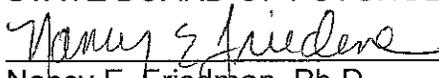
5. Respondent shall fully attend and successfully complete both a course in ethics and a boundary course which are to address transference - counter transference issue. Both courses shall be pre-approved by the Board and shall be completed prior to seeking reinstatement.

6. Respondent shall pay a civil penalty in the amount of \$10,000 for violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e) including violation of N.J.A.C. 13:42-10.9(b). The penalty shall be paid upon the filing of this order by certified check or money order and sent to the attention of J. Michael Walker, Executive Director, Board of Psychological Examiners, P.O. Box 45017, Newark, New Jersey 07101.

7. Respondent shall pay costs incurred by the Board for the investigation of this matter in the amount of three hundred seventy six dollars and fifty cents, (\$376.50). Payment in full shall be remitted by certified check or money order payable to the State of New Jersey to the attention of J. Michael Walker, Executive Director, State Board of Psychological Examiners, P.O. Box 45017, Newark, New Jersey 07101 upon the filing date of this order. 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, and other proceedings as permitted by law.

8. 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

 Ph.D. 8/3/13

Nancy E. Friedman, Ph.D.

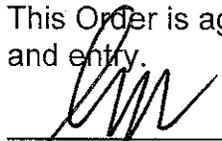
Chair

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.


Beth Grosshans, Ph.D.

DATED: July 24th, 2013

This Order is agreed to as to form and entry.


Christopher Barbrack, Esquire
Attorney for Beth Grosshans, Ph. D.

DATED: 7/25/2013