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FILED WITH THE BOARD OF  
PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS  
ON July 21, 2015  
*J. Michael Walker*

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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

GEORGE ACKLEY, Ph.D.  
LICENSE NO:35S100302800

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

CONSENT ORDER

TO PRACTICE PSYCHOLOGY IN THE  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

This matter was opened to the New Jersey State Board of Psychological Examiners (the Board) upon receipt of information from a complainant, C.G., that George Ackley, Ph. D., (the Respondent) prepared and provided three written reports to the Superior Court dating from 2006 to the present that pertained to child custody and parenting time issues regarding her ex-spouse, D.S. The complainant alleged that the reports are in violation of the Board's February 7, 2005 Consent Order wherein the

Respondent agreed to cease and desist from performing child custody evaluations. In a February 6, 2009 settlement letter issued by the Board, Respondent also agreed to an admonishment and imposition of a \$500 civil penalty, for violating the terms of the 2005 Consent Order in that Respondent had performed a child custody evaluation. The settlement letter provided that Respondent had included language in a letter to a court which constituted an evaluation of a parent and thus violated the terms of the 2005 Consent Order.

The current complainant alleges that Dr. Ackley has continued to address parenting issues concerning C.G.'s ex-spouse and their minor children within risk assessment reports prepared by Respondent on August 8, 2006, September 6, 2007 and December 5, 2011.

Dr. Ackley appeared on June 30, 2014 without an attorney at an investigative inquiry. Respondent testified that he is employed as a full time staff psychologist at Woodbine Developmental Center and has a private practice in Cape May County, N.J. His private practice consists of parole, probation and developmental disability cases wherein he conducts psychotherapy treatment related to developmental disability and offender specific treatment for parole clients.

His involvement in the D.S. case was for offender treatment. He testified that treatment included preparation of

risk assessments. The August 28, 2006 report was prepared at the request of an attorney and the Family Court. He admitted that he prepared risk assessment reports to determine the clinical justification for D.S. to continue care of his minor sons on August 28, 2006 and December 5, 2011. A September 6, 2007 report focused upon clinical readiness of D.S. and supported a reduction in the intensity of supervision that his parents provided of his care and contact with his minor age children.

Respondent testified that he was also involved in issues of guardianship with D.S. His primary focus was the sex offender treatment and the guardianship was a secondary issue for the family. He acknowledged that he appeared at a hearing on April 21, 2014 and he provided testimony to the Mays Landing Family Court about the status of D.S.'s parental guardianship. Respondent claimed that he was no longer involved in this case.

Upon review of all the information, submissions and the Respondent's testimony in this matter, the Board finds that Respondent's conduct in making recommendations to the court concerning child custody issues constituted a violation of the Consent Order voluntarily entered into on February 7, 2005. This conduct constituted professional misconduct pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:45C-1.4., and constitutes a second violation of the consent order.

A review of the risk assessment reports that Respondent prepared on behalf of D.S. demonstrated that the focus of these reports was to determine whether D.S should continue with the active care of his minor children. In one of these risk assessment reports Respondent went beyond assessing whether his client was a risk to his minor child and recommended that he be permitted unsupervised custody of the minor children.

Respondent's representation of his client in the guardianship matter while also providing ongoing treatment to him as a sex offender also constitutes a dual relationship situation in violation of N.J.A.C. 13:43-10.14.

It appearing that the respondent desires to resolve this matter without admissions and without recourse to formal proceedings and for good cause shown:

ACCORDINGLY, ON THIS 21<sup>st</sup> DAY OF July 2015,

ORDERED THAT:

1. Respondent, George Ackley's license to engage in the practice of psychology is suspended for two years upon the service of this Order based on his failure to comply with the terms of the 2005 Consent Order and engaging in a dual relationship.
2. Respondent shall cease and desist from the practice of psychology upon service of this order and shall surrender

his license including his wall certificate and biennial renewal certificate to the Board within 5 days of his receipt of this order.

3. Respondent shall pay a civil penalty in the amount of \$1500.00 for the violations found above. The penalty shall be due and payable no later than 30 days after the filing date of this order or over 18 monthly installments commencing on August 15, 2015 in the amount of 83.33 and a final payment of \$83.24 payable on January 15, 2017. Payment shall be made by certified check, bank cashier check, or money order payable to the "State of New Jersey," or by wire transfer, direct deposit, or credit card payment delivered or mailed to the attention of J. Michael Walker, Executive Director, State Board of Psychological Examiners, P.O. Box 45017, 124 Halsey Street, Newark New Jersey, 07101. Any other form of payment will be rejected and will be returned to the party making the payment.

4. Respondent shall pay costs for the investigation in the amount of \$285.50. Payment shall be due within 30 days after the filing date of this order and made payable to the State of New Jersey in the manner established in Paragraph 2 and forwarded to the attention of J. Michael Walker,

Executive Director of the Board at the address listed in paragraph #2 above.

5. Prior to making any application for the reinstatement of his license to practice psychology, Respondent shall be required to provide documentation of full attendance at and successful completion of a total of 15 hours of continuing education courses, 7.5 hours in boundary courses and 7.5 hours in ethics courses. The courses shall be pre-approved by the Board before they are taken and the majority of the credit hours shall be in-person courses. Respondent shall submit the course syllabus to the Board with ample time for the Board's review prior to the date of each course.
6. Upon application for reinstatement of license respondent shall appear before the board or a committee of the Board to discuss practice plans.
7. Upon reinstatement of his license to practice psychology Respondent's practice shall be limited to risk assessment evaluations and treatment of parole or sex offenders and he is prohibited from practicing in areas regarding child custody, parenting or visitation.

8. Failure to remit any payment required by this Order will result in the filing of a certificate of debt and such other proceedings as are permitted by law.

9. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this Consent Order constitutes a violation of the Order. Similarly, any allegations of misconduct and/or violations of the Practicing Psychology Licensing Act and/or its accompanying regulations on the part of the Respondent shall also serve as grounds for the imposition of any other appropriate disciplinary action as the Board may determine.

NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD  
OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS

By: Nancy E. Friedman Ph.D.  
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.

George W. Ackley Ph.D.  
George Ackley, Ph.D.