

**DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE OF THE
ONTARIO COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS**

Indexed as: Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers v Steven Finlay,
2023 ONCSWSSW 7

Decision 2023/07/21
date:

BETWEEN:

THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS
AND SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS

- and -

STEVEN FINLAY

PANEL:	Chisanga Chekwe	Chair, Public Member
	Sandie Sidsworth	Professional Member
	Charlene Crews	Professional Member

Appearances: Alyssa Armstrong, counsel for the College
Daniel Libman, counsel for the Registrant
Edward Marrocco, Independent Legal Counsel to the Panel

Heard: July 21, 2023

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

[1] This matter came on for hearing via video conference before a panel of the Discipline Committee (the “**Panel**”) of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the “**College**”) on July 21, 2023.

Publication Ban

[2] At the outset of the proceedings, the Panel made an order on consent of all parties prohibiting the publication of any information that could disclose the identity of the individual referred to in these proceedings as the “Client”. This order also requires the anonymization or redaction of any information filed in evidence which could disclose the Client’s identity.

The Allegations

[3] In the Notice of Hearing dated January 27, 2022, the Registrant is alleged to be guilty of professional misconduct pursuant to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, 1998, S.O. 1998, c 31 (the “**Act**”) in that he is alleged to have engaged in conduct or performed an act relevant to the practice of the profession that, having regard to all the circumstances, would be reasonably be regarded by members of the profession as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional and thereby in violation of Section 2.35 of Ontario Regulation 384/00 (the “**Professional Misconduct Regulation**”).

[4] The allegations against the Registrant are set out in the Notice of Hearing and the particulars of those allegations are as follows:

1. You obtained a Master’s Degree in Social Work from Wilfrid Laurier University in 1983.
2. Now, and since 2017, you were a registered social worker with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the “**College**”).
3. Prior to your registration with the College, you provided individual and couples counseling in Ontario.
4. In or about September 2004 to in or about January 2005, you engaged in individual counseling sessions with a client, [redacted], (the “**Client**”). At the time that the client sought your services, she was a 32-year-old woman who:
 - (a) had a religious conservative background;
 - (b) was caring for her two small children, a toddler and an infant; and
 - (c) sought your services for support with marital issues.
5. From in or about November 2004 to in or about January 2005, you provided individual and/or couples’ counselling to the Client and her husband.
6. You engaged in a sexual relationship with the Client from in or about February of 2005 to in or around April of 2005. During the said sexual relationship, you video recorded a sexual encounter between the Client and yourself on at least one occasion.
7. Following the sexual relationship with the Client, she and her husband divorced.
8. In or about November 14, 2005, the Client made a complaint (the “**2005 Complaint**”) to the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (“**AAMFT**”).
9. At all times relevant to the Report, you were registered as a member of the AAMFT.
10. At no time prior or subsequent to your registration with the College did you disclose to the College that there had been a complaint made against you, by the Client, to the AAMFT.

11. In or about January 25, 2021, the College received a mandatory report (the “**Mandatory Report**”) regarding your sexual relationship with the Client.

12. The Client continued to experience distress over the sexual relationship between you and herself for many years. The past sexual relationship has also contributed to the Client’s PTSD.

13. Prior to receiving the Mandatory Report, the College, including the Registration Committee, had no knowledge of your sexual relationship with the Client.

Registrant’s Position

[5] The Registrant was not present at the hearing but was represented by counsel. Counsel provided an explanation for the Registrant’s absence which the Panel accepted and which is not material to these reasons. Through counsel, it was confirmed that the Registrant admitted all the allegations set out in the Notice of Hearing. The Panel was presented with a written plea inquiry that had been signed by the Registrant which was entered as Exhibit 2. The Registrant’s counsel further confirmed under questioning from the Panel that he had no concerns regarding his client’s understanding of the meaning of the plea inquiry or the voluntariness of his client’s admissions.

[6] Based on all of the above, the Panel was satisfied that the Registrant’s admissions were voluntary, informed and unequivocal.

The Evidence

[7] The evidence was tendered by way of an Agreed Statement of Facts, which was filed as Exhibit 3 on the proceeding and provided in relevant part as follows.

I. BACKGROUND

1. Steven Finlay (the “**Registrant**”) graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Glendon College, York University in 1980 and obtained a Master of Clinical Social Work degree from Sir Wilfred Laurier University in 1983.
2. The Registrant has been registered as a social work member of the College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the “**College**”) since 2017. The Registrant was also a member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (“**AAMFT**”), a voluntary association with its own standards of conduct and discipline process, for a number of years before registering with the College, including during 2004 and 2005.
3. Prior to and following his registration with the College, the Registrant provided individual and couples counselling in Ontario. At all material times, the Registrant worked in office space that he rented in Ajax, Ontario, and from his home office in Toronto, Ontario.
4. The allegations in this matter arose out of a mandatory report made to the College by a physician, on January 25, 2021. The substance of the Report was that the physician had received information from a patient ([redacted] or the “**Client**”) that the Registrant had engaged in a sexual relationship with the Client in 2004 and 2005, either during the Registrant’s professional relationship with the Client, or shortly after that professional relationship ended.

5. The Client submitted a complaint to the AAMFT in 2005 regarding the Registrant's sexual relationship with her, but the AAMFT closed the file without determining the allegations on their merits.
6. The Registrant did not disclose the AAMFT complaint to the College when he applied for registration in 2017, or after being registered.
7. Prior to receiving the mandatory report, the College, including the Registration Committee, had no knowledge of the Registrant's personal and sexual relationship with the Client.

II. THE REGISTRANT'S CONDUCT WITH RESPECT TO THE CLIENT

The Counselling Relationship from September 2004 to January 2005

8. The Client sought counselling with the Registrant in 2004 to work on her relationship with her then husband [redacted] and her feelings of depression. The Client was 32 years old at the time, and was married with two small children, a toddler and an infant. The Client had given birth to the couple's second child in January of 2004 and was experiencing what she later identified as post-partum depression.
9. The Client had a very strict, ultra-conservative Christian religious upbringing, and she and her then-husband belonged to the same church. When the Client began counselling with the Registrant, her husband was the only person she had ever been intimate with. The Registrant was aware of these circumstances, based on the information he received during the course of the therapeutic relationship with the Client.
10. From the fall of 2004 until the spring of 2005, the Client and her husband saw the Registrant for couples' and individual counselling. From September 2004 to January 2005, the Registrant engaged in individual counselling with the Client on a weekly basis. The Registrant also provided individual counselling to [redacted] on at least one occasion. In addition, the Client and [redacted] attended approximately four to five sessions of couples counselling with the Registrant starting in November 2004.
11. Initially, the Client felt that she and her ex-husband were making progress through the counselling sessions, but later (in or around January 2005) she began to feel hesitant about continuing to attend therapy, as there were "subtle indications" of "interest" in her by the Registrant. As a result, after attending a counselling session with the Registrant on January 4, 2005, the Client did not immediately rebook a further appointment. However, after follow-up and encouragement by the Registrant, the Client booked another session for Thursday, January 20, 2005, for both herself and her husband.
12. Shortly after that session, on or about January 24, 2005, the Client and the Registrant began to exchange emails which became increasingly "bantering" and personal, crossing the boundaries of an appropriate client/therapist relationship. The Registrant then suggested that he and the Client could have a telephone therapy session and gave the Client his home phone number. When the Client called the Registrant for the phone therapy session, the conversation lasted for two-and-a-half hours, during which the Registrant disclosed a significant amount of personal information. The phone call concluded with the Client booking another session with the Registrant for the following day at noon in his office.
13. On approximately January 25, 2005 or January 26, 2005, the Client met the Registrant at his

office. During that appointment, the Registrant suggested that the Client should probably delete the emails they had exchanged and the Client confirmed that she had already done so. The Client also expressed to the Registrant her concern about the “chemistry” that appeared to be developing between them. She told the Registrant that she was not sure how to interpret these feelings or how to deal with them.

14. In response, the Registrant advised the Client to look up the concept of “transference” when she was at home and indicated that he would prefer if the Client walked herself out of his office. However, when the Client stood up to put on her coat to leave, the Registrant hugged her in a lingering manner.
15. The Registrant does not deny that this discussion of transference and “chemistry” occurred, or that there was a hug at the end of the session. However, if he were to testify, the Registrant would say that the Client was the one who initiated the hug.
16. The Registrant and the Client spoke on the phone a number of times in the days immediately following the session at the Registrant’s office, attempting to process what had occurred. During one of those phone calls, the Registrant invited the Client to meet him at his home on a Friday, when he would be working from his home office. The purpose of the meeting (as explained to the Client by the Registrant) was to determine whether therapy should be discontinued or the therapeutic relationship could be salvaged. At the time that the Friday meeting at the Registrant’s home was arranged, the therapeutic relationship had not yet been terminated.

Commencement of the Sexual Relationship

17. On Friday January 28, 2005, the Client went to the Registrant’s home in Toronto. When the Client arrived, the Registrant was dressed professionally. However, the Registrant gave the Client a glass of wine, telling her that it was intended to “take the edge off” or to “relax.” The Registrant then laid down on the couch with the Client and they kissed.
18. The Client recalls telling the Registrant that he could not allow anything to happen between them because she had a husband whom she loved and that she had never been sexually intimate with anyone other than her husband. The Registrant told the Client that he would lose his career if something happened and that she could not tell anyone, “even about what we are doing now”, or words to that effect. The Client promised not to say anything.
19. The January 28th meeting at the Registrant’s home was not billed as a formal session and the Registrant did not keep any clinical notes relating to the meeting. However, the Registrant admits that the meeting occurred. If he were to testify, the Registrant would say that he provided the Client with referrals to other therapists at that time and that as of January 28, 2005, the therapeutic relationship was terminated. While the Registrant denies that any sexual conduct, including kissing, occurred during the January 28th meeting at his house, he does not deny that he had a sexual relationship with the Client. Rather, he denies that a sexual relationship commenced on that date, or that he had a sexual relationship with an “active client”.
20. If the Client were to testify, she would state that the therapeutic relationship was still ongoing as of the January 28, 2005 meeting. On that date, the Client and the Registrant commenced a 3-month sexual relationship, during which the Registrant eventually persuaded the Client to allow him to videotape one of their sexual encounters, which the Client found to be traumatic.

Previous Admissions by the Registrant re the Sexual Relationship

21. The Client ended the relationship with the Registrant in late April or early May of 2005. That there was a sexual relationship is clear from the tenor of the email exchange between the Registrant and the Client on July 27, 2005, when the Client wrote to cancel a lunch that had been arranged by the Registrant to explain his feelings to her in person. The Client's email refers to the devastating consequences of her relationship with the Registrant, stating: "I tried to put meaning into that relationship because how could 'I' have been intimately involved with someone if it were just a fleeting fling?". The Registrant's reply says, in part "I fell for you and lost myself". The Registrant stated that his "feelings for you [the Client] were genuine and sincere, but inappropriate". A copy of the email exchange between the Client and the Registrant is attached as **Tab "A"** to the Agreed Statement of Facts.

22. The Registrant also made admissions to others about his sexual relationship with the Client, including his (former) friends [redacted] and [redacted]. According to [redacted]:

...toward the end of January and beginning of February 2005, [the Registrant] mentioned to me that he was tempted to become involved with a patient he was seeing in his private practice. He described the woman to me, and she certainly seemed attractive and like a genuinely nice person. I told him that I would find it difficult in that situation to just 'walk away', and he admitted the same. He told me she was experiencing transference, that she was a very attractive girl, and he did not think he could say 'no'. A short time later, he included me in an e mail exchange between himself and [the Client]. I expressed that it would be difficult to walk away, and exchanged a short number of emails with the Registrant and the Client.

AAMFT Complaint

23. As previously noted, the Registrant was a member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists ("AAMFT") in 2004-2005, although he was not yet registered as a social work member of the College.

24. On November 14, 2005, the Client made a complaint to AAMFT about the Registrant's conduct. The substance of the complaint was that a sexual relationship had occurred between the Registrant and the Client when she was a client of the Registrant. The Client had sought out the Registrant's services and support relating to marital conflict. The details of this complaint and the AAMFT's file formed part of the College investigation of this matter.

25. AAMFT conducted an investigation into the Registrant's conduct, which investigation included collecting the Registrant's clinical notes, providing the Registrant with draft allegations, and receiving a response from the Registrant. However, the AAMFT ceased its investigation and dismissed the complaint on August 10, 2006, without adjudicating the complaint on its merits.

26. The AAMFT's dismissal was based on the misunderstanding that the Client no longer wished to pursue the complaint. In fact, the Client's correspondence with the AAMFT reflects that while she did not wish to pursue any civil court claim for compensation, due to the stress that would place on her and her family, she was prepared to provide sworn statements to the AAMFT from herself and [redacted], and asked to be informed of the AAMFT's decision about her complaint. Copies of the Client's correspondence with the AAMFT regarding the dismissal of the complaint are attached as **Tab "B"** to the Agreed Statement of Facts.

Ongoing Impact of the Registrant's Conduct

27. The Registrant's conduct had a significant impact on the Client. In the wake of the sexual relationship with the Registrant, the Client's marriage ended and the guilt and shame experienced by the Client contributed to the breakdown of the marriage. The Client became a single parent to her two children, she was no longer welcomed within her church community, and she developed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder ("PTSD"). The Client continued to experience mental health difficulties relating to the sexual relationship with the Registrant for many years after the sexual relationship ended.

College Investigation and Referral to Discipline

28. After receiving the mandatory report, the College appointed an investigator on March 5, 2021 to gather information relating to the allegations contained in the mandatory report.
29. The Registrant provided the College with a written response to the allegations in the mandatory report, dated August 23, 2021, in which he admitted to a romantic relationship with the Client after the therapeutic relationship had terminated.
30. The College's Executive Committee referred the allegations of professional misconduct with respect to the Registrant to the Discipline Committee on January 26, 2022. Those allegations are set out in the Notice of Hearing in this matter, dated January 27, 2022.
31. The Registrant does not have any history of discipline with the College. The Registrant has not worked as social worker over the past year, as his health has declined. More recently, the Registrant was hospitalized for approximately 20 days in January 2023 for a brain injury after he fell at his residence. He does not intend to return to practice or work in any capacity moving forward, owing to ongoing health issues including some degree of likely Alzheimer's dementia.

III. ADMISSIONS OF PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

32. The Registrant admits that by reason of engaging in the conduct outlined above, he is guilty of professional misconduct as set out in section 26(2)(a) and (c) of the Act, in that:
 - a. he violated **Section 2.36 of the Professional Misconduct Regulation** by engaging in conduct or performing an act relevant to the practice of the profession that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.
33. The Registrant understands the nature of the allegations that have been made against him and that by voluntarily admitting the allegations, he waives his right to require the College to otherwise prove the case against him.
34. The Registrant irrevocably acknowledges and agrees that all facts in this Agreed Statement of Facts are true and accurate.
35. The Registrant understands that the panel of the Discipline Committee can accept that the facts herein constitute professional misconduct and that if the panel does so, the panel will then consider the appropriate penalty to impose on the Registrant.

36. The Registrant understands that any agreement between him and the College does not bind the Discipline Committee.
37. The Registrant understands that the panel of the Discipline Committee can make orders as a result of a finding of professional misconduct, as described in the Notice of Hearing dated January 27, 2022, and if the panel makes orders, it will then determine the appropriate penalty under section 26(4)-(9) of the Act. The Registrant understands that the panel of the Discipline Committee might not accept a submission as to penalty or costs, even where jointly proposed by the parties.
38. The Registrant understands that if the panel makes a finding or findings of professional misconduct against him, then the panel's decision and its reasons, and/or a summary of its reasons including the facts contained herein, and the Registrant's name will be published in the College's official Registrant publication, in the College's register, on the College's website, and/or on CanLII (the website operated by the Canadian Legal Information Institute).
39. The Registrant acknowledges that he has had the opportunity to (and did) consult with legal counsel before making the admissions contained herein.
40. The Registrant and the College consented to the Panel viewing the Notice of Hearing and the Agreed Statement of Facts prior to the start of the hearing.

Decision of the Panel

[8] Having considered the admissions of the Registrant, the evidence contained in the Agreed Statement of Facts, and the submissions of counsel, the Panel found that the Registrant committed the acts of professional misconduct alleged in the Notice of Hearing. The Panel found that the Registrant's conduct would reasonably be regarded by members of the profession as disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional.

Reasons for Decision

[9] The parties agreed that the Panel has jurisdiction under the Act to make findings of professional misconduct for conduct which occurred prior to registration with the College where that conduct is so serious as to reflect on the Registrant's suitability to practice. The Panel was jointly presented with the cases of *OCSWSSW v Kline* and *OCSWSSW v Ackerman* in support of this proposition.

[10] The Panel relied on and accepted the Agreed Statement of Facts, along with the documentary evidence enclosed with it, consisting of email exchanges between the Registrant and the Client and correspondence between AAMFT and the Client regarding the prior uninvestigated 2005 complaint - which was based on the same underlying facts as the matter before this Panel.

[11] Through the Agreed Statement of Facts, the Registrant admitted to engaging in a sexual relationship with a client. Although this admission was subject to disagreement about whether the Client was an active client or a former client at the time that the sexual relationship commenced, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice clearly state that sexual relations between College members and clients to whom the members have provided psychotherapy and/or counselling

services are prohibited. This prohibition includes any time following termination of the professional relationship, thus making the timeline of the commencement of the sexual relationship immaterial.

[12] The submissions of both counsel, together with the standalone signed plea inquiry, the unequivocal admissions in the Agreed Statements of Facts and the explanation from counsel for the Registrant's inability to join the hearing, left the Panel with no doubt that the admissions before it were wholly voluntary, informed and unequivocal.

[13] For the reasons set out above, the Panel found on a balance of probabilities that the Registrant is guilty of professional misconduct as set out in the Notice of Hearing.

[14] The Panel was also satisfied that the Registrant's current personal circumstances, which prevent him from practising both now or in the foreseeable future, result in no imminent or ongoing risk to the public.

[15] The misconduct admitted in this proceeding is very serious. It unarguably contains an element of moral failing on the part of the Registrant which the Registrant either knew or ought to have known was totally unacceptable. The Registrant's actions were shameful and they brought shame not only on the Registrant himself but the broader profession and cast serious doubt on his suitability to practice. The Panel found the evidence overwhelming that the misconduct in this case rose the level of being disgraceful, dishonourable, and unprofessional.

Penalty Submissions

[16] The parties were in agreement on the issue of penalty and costs. They presented a signed undertaking to the Panel from the Registrant irrevocably surrendering his registration with the College as of July 14, 2023 with a promise to never again practice as a social worker in Ontario. The parties also presented a Joint Submission as to Penalty and Costs ("**Joint Submission**") asking this Panel make an order as follows:

1. Steven Finlay (the "**Registrant**") shall be reprimanded in writing by the Discipline Committee and the fact and nature of the reprimand shall be recorded on the College's Register for an unlimited period of time, pursuant to s. 26(5)(1) of the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998*, S.O. 1998 c. 31 (the "**Act**").
2. The Registrant's Undertaking, Agreement & Acknowledgement, dated July 14, 2023, and the Discipline Committee's finding and Order (or summaries thereof) shall be published, with identifying information concerning the Registrant included, in the College's official publication and on the College's website, and the results of the hearing shall be recorded on the Register and in any other media-related format that is provided to the public and is deemed appropriate by the College, pursuant to s. 26(5)(3) of the Act.
3. The Registrant shall pay costs to the College in the amount of seven thousand dollars (\$7,000), by e-transfer or certified funds, in accordance with the following payment schedule:

- (a) \$1,000 to be paid on or before the date of the hearing in this matter; and

(b) A further twelve (12) payments of \$500 per month to be paid on or before the first day of the next twelve (12) months, with the first such payment to occur on or before the first day of the calendar month following the hearing, and the remaining payments to occur on or before the first day of each of the eleven (11) subsequent months thereafter.

Should the Registrant fail to make any payment in accordance with the above payment schedule, the entire outstanding balance of the \$7,000 costs award shall immediately become payable.

[17] In support of the Joint Submission, both counsel emphasized the policy reasons which support acceptance of joint submissions. Counsel also highlighted that the permanent surrender of the Registrant's status with the College combined with an undertaking to never re-apply is a very severe outcome commensurate with the seriousness of the admitted misconduct. Counsel for the Registrant submitted that a permanent prohibition on re-application would not be available in circumstances of a revocation order and that, as such, this outcome is arguably even more severe than the options which would otherwise be available to the Panel under the Act.

Penalty Decision

[18] Having considered the findings of professional misconduct, the evidence and the submissions of the parties, the Panel accepted the Joint Submission and made an order consistent with its terms before the conclusion of the hearing.

Reasons for Penalty Decision

[19] The Panel recognized that an appropriate penalty must maintain high professional standards, preserve public confidence in the ability of the College to regulate its members, and, above all, protect the public. This is achieved through a penalty that considers the principles of general deterrence, specific deterrence and, where appropriate, rehabilitation and remediation of a registrant's practice. The Panel also accepted the principle that a panel should accept a joint submission on penalty unless to do so would be contrary to the public interest and bring disrepute upon the tribunal.

[20] The Joint Submission does not undermine the publicly perceived integrity of this Tribunal. The Panel carefully reviewed the parties' submissions and found the Joint Submission to be reasonable, serve and protect the public interest, and preserve the public's confidence in College's ability to regulate its registrants. The Joint Submission has components which provide both specific and general deterrence, sending a clear message to both this Registrant and the membership at large that this type of conduct will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted in a manner consistent with its severity.

[21] The Panel considered the aggravating factors including the Registrant not disclosing the 2005 AAMFT complaint to the College when applying for and renewing his certificate of membership between 2017 and 2023, the Client's vulnerabilities including the impact this has had on the Client's family and personal life, the subsequent rejection of the Client from their faith community and the long lasting impact the sexual relationship has already had on the Client's life.

The Panel acknowledges in particular that the Client developed post-traumatic symptoms following these events which the Client has now been living with for almost 20 years.

[22] The Panel also considered the mitigating factors in that the Registrant had no prior discipline history with the College, that he ultimately admitted to professional misconduct and entered into the Agreed Statement of Facts and the Joint Submission. These admissions saved the Client and any other witnesses from having to testify and relive past traumas. It also reduced the burden on the College and saved the broader membership from incurring further costs to bring the matter to a resolution.

[23] The Panel has issued a written reprimand to the Registrant in this case. The Panel notes that a written reprimand is uncommon. Reprimands are typically delivered orally to ensure that their message is properly received by a registrant. The Registrant's personal circumstances in this case warranted an exception to the standard practice but this decision should not be interpreted as supporting that written reprimands are interchangeable with oral reprimands. The written reprimand in this case will serve the objective of specific deterrence and highlights the impact of the Registrant's actions on the Client, the professions of Social Work and Social Service Work and will affirm the public's continued trust in the professions as a whole.

[24] The Panel is confident that the Undertaking Agreement & Acknowledgement, which prevents the Registrant from ever applying for registration again, serves as a further protection to the public.

[25] As noted earlier, the Panel is satisfied that the Registrant's current personal circumstances, which prevent him from practising now or in the foreseeable future, ensure there will be no ongoing risk to the public.

[26] Publication of the Registrant's name along with this decision and reprimand will serve as both a specific and general deterrent and will promote the transparency required to maintain public confidence in the College's discipline process.

[27] The order on costs is both fair and reasonable in this matter. It falls consistently with former orders made by this Discipline Committee and other regulators for similar conduct. Having the Registrant pay a portion of the incurred costs ensures that the general membership does not bear the full burden of the cost to prosecute this matter.

[28] For these reasons, the Panel found no reason to depart from the Joint Submission and ordered accordingly.

I, Chisanga Chekwe, sign this decision as chairperson of the Panel and on behalf of the Panel members listed below.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Chisanga Chekwe, Chair
Sandie Sidsworth
Charlene Crews

Appendix A – Written Reprimand

Steven Finlay, as part of its penalty order this Discipline Panel has ordered that you be given a reprimand in writing.

This written reprimand will be part of the public portion of the Register and, as such, part of your record with the College.

The Panel has found that you have engaged in professional misconduct in several ways.

You abused the inherent power dynamic in the client therapist relationship, failed to ensure that your client's needs remained paramount. You failed to maintain professional boundaries with your client, whom you knew to be vulnerable, when you shared your personal contact information, engaged in emails, text messages and telephone conversations of a personal nature, disclosed information about your personal life, shared alcoholic beverages with in your home and engaged in a sexual relationship, which included videotaping a sexual encounter despite their resistance.

You were aware of the inappropriate nature of your actions and made efforts to cover up your conduct when you:

- requested that your client delete the mutual email and text messages;
- asked your client not to disclose the nature of your personal relationship to others; and
- failed to disclose a prior professional misconduct complaint to another professional body when you applied to the College for registration and in all subsequent renewal years.

Your misconduct is a matter of profound concern to this Panel. You have brought discredit to the profession and to yourself. Public confidence in this profession has been put in jeopardy. You have let down the public, the social work profession, and yourself.

Your conduct is unacceptable. Of special concern to us is that despite knowing your client's vulnerabilities and conservative religious values, which observes monogamy, you pursued a sexual relationship which you ought to have known would have a devastating and enduring impact on the client's family and community life, and their concept of self.