

**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 Sweet, 2024
ONCSWSSW 1

Decision 20240205
date:

BETWEEN:

THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS
AND SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS

- and -

PATRICK SWEET

PANEL:	Charlene Crews	Chair, Professional Member
	Rita Silverthorn	Professional Member
	Vera Mercier	Public Member

Appearances: Ben Kates, counsel for the College
Registrant not in attendance, no one appearing
Edward Marrocco, Independent Legal Counsel to the Panel

Heard: November 15, 2023

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

- [1] This matter came on for hearing via videoconference before a panel of the Discipline Committee (the “**Panel**”) on November 15, 2023 at the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the “**College**”).
- [2] This was the second attempted hearing in the matter. In an endorsement dated August 29, 2023, a panel of the Discipline Committee of the College had adjourned this proceeding due to non-attendance of Mr. Sweet (the “**Registrant**”).
- [3] The Registrant did not appear for this second hearing either. After hearing submissions from College counsel and receiving documentary evidence detailing service of the Notice

of Hearing and efforts to schedule hearing dates with the Registrant, the Panel was satisfied that the Registrant had notice of the proceedings and had elected not to participate. The Panel held that the hearing could proceed despite the Registrant's absence.

Publication ban

- [4] At the outset of the hearing the Panel granted an order in the nature of a publication ban by request of the College. The Panel ordered that there will be no details or information reproduced about this proceeding which may directly or indirectly cause the individual referred to in this matter as "C1" to be publicly identifiable.

The Allegations

- [5] In the Notice of Hearing dated November 23, 2022, the Registrant is alleged to be guilty of professional misconduct pursuant to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, 1998, SO 1998, c 31 (the "**Act**") in that he is alleged to have engaged in conduct that contravenes the Act, Ontario Regulation 384/00 (the "**Professional Misconduct Regulation**"), Schedule "A" to By-law No. 66 of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, being the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Code of Ethics (the "**Code of Ethics**"), and Schedule "B" to By-law No. 66 of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, being the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Standards of Practice Handbook (the "**Handbook**").

- [6] The Notice of Hearing alleges as follows:

The following are particulars of the said allegations:

1. Now and at all times relevant to the allegations, you were a registered social service worker with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the "**College**"). At all relevant times, you provided social service work services to clients through your employment at ["Hospital A"].
2. From time to time between October 2020 and March 2021, inclusive, you provided social service work services to client C1 through the outreach housing support program at ["Hospital A"]. The services you provided to C1 during that time included, among other things, performing suicide assessments and assisting with and monitoring activities of daily living. C1 was a vulnerable client.
3. You last provided C1 with social service work services on or about March 29, 2021, after which C1 relocated to a different region of Ontario. You had ongoing professional obligations in relation to C1 notwithstanding that you were no longer actively providing her with social service work services.
4. Between April and October 2021, you violated professional boundaries and/or engaged in behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature towards C1 that were not of a clinical nature appropriate to the service provided. In particular, you:
 - (a) Initiated contact with C1 on the Facebook Messenger platform and requested that she become your Facebook "friend";
 - (b) Failed to establish or maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in your personal communications with C1;
 - (c) Indicated to C1 that you wished to continue messaging her and put the onus on her to tell you to stop;

- (d) Initiated conversations with C1 over Facebook Messenger on at least four occasions;
 - (e) Exchanged Facebook Messenger messages with C1 that were personal, flirtatious, and/or unprofessional in nature. Examples of these personal and/or unprofessional messages include, but are not limited to:
 - (i) Telling C1 that you really enjoyed being around her, that it was always good to see her, and that you missed seeing her;
 - (ii) Asking C1 on three different occasions what she had been doing “for fun”; and
 - (iii) Asking C1 if she had been dating.
 - (f) On or about October 25, 2021, asked C1 if she would like to go out with you sometime.
5. On or about October 27, 2021, C1 disclosed your Facebook Messenger communications to a registered social worker who was providing C1 with social work services. The registered social worker reported your conduct to the College in accordance with their professional obligations.
6. C1 looked up to you as a result of the social service work services that you provided to her. Your conduct harmed C1 and made her feel uncomfortable.

II. It is alleged that by reason of engaging in some or all of the conduct outlined above, you are guilty of professional misconduct as set out in section 26(2)(a) and (c) of the Act:

- (a) In that you violated **Section 2.2 of the Professional Misconduct Regulation** by failing to meet the standards of the profession and in particular:
 - (i) **Principle I of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretations 1.5 and 1.6)** by failing to be aware of your values, attitudes and needs and how those impact on your professional relationship with clients; by failing to distinguish your needs and interests from those of your clients to ensure that, within your professional relationship, clients’ needs and interests remained paramount.
 - (ii) **Principle II of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretations 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.8)** by:
 - (A) failing to ensure clients are protected from an abuse of power, including sexual misconduct, after the provision of professional services and/or failing to establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in a professional relationship;
 - (B) engaging in a professional relationship that constitutes a conflict of interest and/or in a situation in which you ought reasonably to have known that the client or former client would be at risk; failing to evaluate professional relationships and other situations involving clients or former clients for potential conflicts of interest; failing to avoid conflicts of interest and/or dual relationship with clients or former clients that could impair your professional judgment or increase risk of exploitation or harm to clients or former clients;
 - (C) engaging in sexual relations with a client or former client, through behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature other than behaviour or remarks of a clinical nature appropriate to the service provided, where these relations, combined with the professional relationship, would create a conflict of interest;
 - (D) using information obtained in the course of a professional relationship and/or using your professional position of authority, to improperly influence, harass, abuse or exploit a client or former client; and

- (E) engaging in conduct that could reasonably be perceived as reflecting negatively on the profession of social service work;

(iii) **Principle III of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretations 3.7)** by:

- (A) by failing, in the context of a personal relationship with a client or former client, to assume full responsibility for demonstrating that the client or former client was not exploited, coerced or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally;

(iv) **Principle VIII of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretations 8.1 and 8.8)** by:

- (A) failing to ensure that sexual misconduct does not occur; and
- (B) engaging in sexual relations with a client to whom you provided social services work within one year following termination of the professional relationship, through behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature other than behaviour or remarks of a clinical nature appropriate to the service provided;

- (b) In that you violated **Section 2.6 of the Professional Misconduct Regulation** by using information obtained during a professional relationship with a client or using your professional position of authority to coerce, improperly influence, harass, or exploit a client or former client; and/or
- (c) In that you 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 circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.

Registrant's Position

[7] Despite the Registrant's absence, the Panel was presented with an Agreed Statement of Facts which the College sought to enter as the Registrant's plea to the allegations. The Panel reviewed the Agreed Statement of Facts in detail and notes, among other things, that in addition to having been signed by the Registrant and witnessed, the document contains a series of acknowledgements at paragraphs 21-29. These acknowledgements cover questions which would ordinarily be canvassed in a plea inquiry, confirm that the Registrant has had the opportunity to obtain legal advice, and expressly stipulate that the signing parties agree the document can be filed with the Panel on consent. These acknowledgements are reproduced in these reasons in the subsequent section.

[8] In such circumstances, the Panel is satisfied that the Registrant's admissions contained in the Agreed Statement of Facts are voluntary, informed and unequivocal. The Panel accepted the Agreed Statement of Facts as the Registrant's plea and proceeded with the matter as an uncontested hearing.

The Evidence

[9] As noted above, the evidence was tendered by way of an Agreed Statement of Facts. The document provides in relevant part as follows:

A. Background and Overview

1. Patrick Sweet (the "**Registrant**") obtained a Diploma from Fleming College in 2012. He first registered as a Social Service Worker on June 5, 2012 and is currently registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the "**College**") in that capacity.

2. At the relevant time, the Registrant worked in the outreach housing support program at ["Hospital A"]. His role involved attending at clients' homes and helping them build the skills they need to succeed at home, such as organizing, budgeting, laundry, and grocery shopping.

B. Services Provided by the Registrant to C1

3. On September 25, 2020, C1 was referred to ["Hospital A"] from ["Hospital B"]. C1 was initially referred to ["Hospital B"] by an OPP Officer in January 2020 following a contemplated suicide. ["Hospital B"] does not have a housing support program. It refers clients in need of housing assistance to the housing support program at ["Hospital A"], located approximately an hour away. It was in this context that ["Hospital B"] referred C1 to ["Hospital A"] and, ultimately, to the Registrant.
4. At the time of the referral, C1 was a young single mother of three children aged 5, 3, and 4 weeks. C1's social worker at ["Hospital B"] was of the view that she could benefit from support with organizing, tidying, dishes, and laundry. The social worker was also of the view that symptoms of depression might impact C1's productivity around the home.
5. The Registrant assumed carriage of C1's file at ["Hospital A"] in and around October 2020. On October 21, 2020, the Registrant and a colleague performed an initial assessment at C1's home, where they observed C1's challenges with activities of daily living. Following that visit, the Registrant and his colleagues at ["Hospital A"] concluded that C1's children, rather than her mental health, had the greater impact on her activities of daily living and that C1 was in need of a routine. They agreed that the Registrant would provide short term, minimal visits to assist C1 with getting into a routine.
6. The Registrant served as C1's housing support worker from October 2020 to March 2021. During the period of service provision, the Registrant and C1 were in contact approximately 31 times, including nine home visits. The Registrant conducted nearly 20 suicide assessments of C1 between October 21, 2020 and March 29, 2021. The Registrant assisted with and monitored C1's activities of daily living, including washing and putting away dishes and taking out the garbage. Among other things, C1 consulted the Registrant about her use of anti-depressants, issues with her landlord, and domestic abuse by an ex-boyfriend and his pending trial (C1 had reported intimate partner violence to police in September 2020).
7. At the end of March 2021, C1 relocated to a different municipality. It was contemplated that C1 might continue to receive support from local resources in her new city. On his last home visit, the Registrant advised the C1 that he would provide her with the contact information for a local Canadian Mental Health Association office in her new area.

C. The Registrant's Facebook Messages

8. On or about April 28, 2021, the Registrant contacted C1 on the Facebook Messenger platform, and they became Facebook "friends". The Registrant and C1 exchanged messages from time to time between April and October 2021.
9. The Registrant and C1 exchanged several messages on Facebook Messenger on April 28, 2021. The Registrant initially asked C1 how the move had gone and how she was doing. She updated him about school and the fact that she had quit her job. The Registrant stated, "Let me [know] if there's anything I can do". He then asked, "What you been doing for fun"? C1 responded that she had been spending her time working and in school.
10. The Registrant went on to make several comments that conveyed his feelings for C1:
 - (a) "I would like to keep chatting with you if that's all right";
 - (b) "Really enjoyed being around you";
 - (c) "It was always good to see you"; and
 - (d) "I miss seeing you".

11. The Registrant messaged C1 on Facebook Messenger the following week, on May 3, 2021. She responded the following day. The Registrant told C1 that he was “home and bored”. The two had a brief exchange about working from home and the COVID-19 stay-at-home order in place at the time. The Registrant again asked C1, “What you been doing for fun”? Three days later, on May 7, 2021, the Registrant wrote to C1, “Hey. How’s it going”. C1 did not respond.
12. The Registrant wrote to C1 on June 21, 2021, again on Facebook Messenger. He asked C1, “What you been up to [*sic*],” and, “Have you been doing anything for fun”. In response, C1 told the Registrant that she had been doing lots of school and getting back into reading. The Registrant asked C1, “Have you been dating.” She responded that she had been dating “a bit”.
13. The next and final Facebook Messenger exchange between the Registrant and C1 took place four months later, on October 25, 2021. The Registrant asked C1 how “things” were, whether she still liked her new city, and how her children were doing. After C1 told him that her children were “great”, he asked, “Would you like to go out with me sometime”? C1 responded, “I have a boyfriend...?” The Registrant apologized.
14. C1 then “blocked” the Registrant, and, as a result, he could no longer contact her over Facebook Messenger.
15. In asking C1 out, the Registrant made her feel “really uncomfortable”. Throughout the time the Registrant provided C1 with social work services, she had looked up to him because he reminded her of her stepfather.
16. The Registrant did not make any comments of the nature of his Facebook messages while he was providing C1 with social work services.
17. A copy of the online conversations between the Registrant and C1 between April and October 2021 are reproduced in their entirety at **Schedule “A”** to this Agreed Statement of Facts. True copies of the messages themselves are attached at **Exhibit “A”** to this agreed statement of facts.

D. Disclosure by C1

18. On October 27, 2021, the C1 spoke by telephone with her social worker at [“Hospital B”] in a scheduled appointment. At the end of their conversation, C1 disclosed to her social worker the online exchanges with the Registrant that took place between April and October 2021 and told her that they had made her uncomfortable. The social worker advised C1 of her duty as a social worker to report the incident, that she would speak to her supervisor, and that she would provide an update. The social worker obtained C1’s consent to release her name and contact number with the College. After consulting her supervisor, the social worker contacted the College on October 28, 2021. She then filed a mandatory Reporting Form with the College on November 4, 2021.

E. Admissions of Professional Misconduct

19. The Registrant agrees that the following are standards of the profession, as set out in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook (the “**Handbook**”):
 - (a) Principle I addresses relationships with clients;
 - (b) Principle II addresses competence and integrity; and
 - (c) Principle III addresses responsibility to clients; and
 - (d) Principle VIII addresses sexual misconduct.
20. 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 *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998*, SO 1998, c 31 (the “**Act**”), in that the Registrant:
 - (a) Violated section 2.2 of the O. Reg. 384/00: Professional Misconduct (the “**Professional Misconduct Regulation**”) by failing to meet the standards of the profession and in particular:

- (i) Principle I of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretations 1.5 and 1.6) by failing to be aware of his values, attitudes and needs and how those impact on his professional relationship with clients; by failing to distinguish his needs and interests from those of his clients to ensure that, within his professional relationship, clients' needs and interests remained paramount;
- (ii) Principle II of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretations 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.8) by:
 - 1. Failing to ensure clients are protected from an abuse of power, including sexual misconduct, after the provision of professional services and/or failing to establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in a professional relationship;
 - 2. Engaging in a professional relationship that constitutes a conflict of interest and/or in a situation in which he ought reasonably to have known that the client or former client would be at risk; failing to evaluate professional relationships and other situations involving clients or former clients for potential conflicts of interest; failing to avoid conflicts of interest and/or dual relationship with clients or former clients that could impair his professional judgment or increase risk of exploitation or harm to clients or former clients;
 - 3. Engaging in sexual relations with a client or former client, through behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature other than behaviour or remarks of a clinical nature appropriate to the service provided, where these relations, combined with the professional relationship, would create a conflict of interest;
 - 4. Using information obtained in the course of a professional relationship and/or using his professional position of authority, to improperly influence, harass, abuse or exploit a client or former client; and
 - 5. Engaging in conduct that could reasonably be perceived as reflecting negatively on the profession of social service work.
- (iii) Principle III of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretation 3.7) by failing, in the context of a personal relationship with a client or former client, to assume full responsibility for demonstrating that the client or former client was not exploited, coerced or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally; and
- (iv) Principle VIII of the Handbook (commented on in Interpretations 8.1 and 8.8) by :
 - 1. Failing to ensure that sexual misconduct does not occur; and
 - 2. Engaging in sexual relations with a client to whom he provided social services work within one year following termination of the professional relationship, through behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature other than behaviour or remarks of a clinical nature appropriate to the service provided; and
- (b) Violated section 2.6 of the Professional Misconduct Regulation in that he used information obtained during a professional relationship with a client and/or his professional position of authority to coerce, improperly influence, harass or exploit a client or former client; and
- (c) 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 circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable, and unprofessional.

G. Acknowledgements

21. Having had the opportunity to obtain independent legal advice, the Registrant has reviewed and understands the Notice of Hearing dated November 23, 2022 (the “**Notice of Hearing**”) and this agreed statement of facts, including Schedule A and Exhibit A hereto (the “**Agreed Statement of Facts**”). The Registrant further acknowledges that he is entering into this Agreed Statement of Facts freely and voluntarily, without compulsion or duress.

22. This Agreed Statement of Facts constitutes a statement of facts agreed upon by the parties within the meaning of rule 13.02 of the *Rules of Procedure of the Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers*.
23. The Registrant irrevocably acknowledges and agrees that all the facts in this Agreed Statement of Fact are true and accurate.
24. The College and the Registrant voluntarily admit the truth of the facts as recounted in this Agreed Statement of Facts.
25. The Registrant understands the nature of the allegations that have been made against him and that by voluntarily admitting these facts, he waives his right to require the College to otherwise prove these facts. The College and the Registrant agree that because of the admissions in this Agreed Statement of Facts, neither the College nor the Registrant need to prove the facts recounted in this Agreed Statement of Facts through a full hearing with witnesses' testimony and other evidence.
26. The College and the Registrant understand that, at a hearing into this matter, they may adduce additional evidence pertaining to some or all of the allegations contained in the Notice of Hearing that is consistent with the facts agreed to in this Agreed Statement of Facts. The College and the Registrant understand that, at a hearing into this matter, they are prohibited from adducing additional evidence that is inconsistent with the facts agreed to in this Agreed Statement of Facts.
27. The Registrant understands that a panel of the Discipline Committee (the "**Panel**") can accept that the facts herein constitute professional misconduct and, in particular, can accept his admissions as constituting professional misconduct.
28. The Registrant understands that the Panel can make orders as a result of a finding of professional misconduct, as described in the Notice of Hearing, and then would consider the appropriate penalty under section 26 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.
29. The College and the Registrant consent to this Agreed Statement of Facts being filed the Discipline Committee and provided to the Panel in advance of the hearing of this matter.

Decision of the panel

- [10] Having considered 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. With respect to allegation II(c), the Panel finds that the Registrant's conduct would reasonably be regarded by other members of the profession as disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional.

Reasons for decision

- [11] The Panel agreed with College counsel that the evidence contained in the Agreed Statement of Facts included all of the facts required to find that the Registrant engaged in the misconduct alleged in the Notice of Hearing.
- [12] At paragraphs [3]-[7], the evidence confirms that the Registrant provided social service work to C1 and that C1 was a young single mother with a history of mental illness and who had endured intimate partner violence. The Panel is satisfied that C1 was clearly a vulnerable client and that the Registrant knew this.

- [13] The evidence also confirms that after C1 moved away from the municipality where the Registrant had been providing services, the Registrant contacted C1 on social media and proceeded to make several inquiries over a period of months. These inquiries culminated in asking C1 out on a date. This is undoubtedly a boundary violation.
- [14] College counsel submitted that the totality and prolonged nature of the Registrant's engagement with C1 over social media was sufficient to establish that the Registrant had romantic intentions toward C1. When the Registrant was able to communicate with C1 "unrebuffed" as College counsel phrased it, he became emboldened to become increasingly invasive and then ultimately tried to ask C1 out.
- [15] When the evidence is combined with the express admissions of the Registrant contained, among other places, at paragraph 20(a)(ii)(3), the Panel is satisfied that on the record before it, the Registrant engaged in behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature. As a result of this finding, the Panel similarly accepts that all of the misconduct alleged in the Notice of Hearing, including but not limited to failing to protect against abuse of power or sexual misconduct (after the provision of professional services), conflict of interest, improper use of information obtained in the course of the clinical relationship, failing to prevent against exploitation in the context of a personal relationship, and engaging in sexual relations through remarks of a sexual nature, are all supported on the record.
- [16] Conduct of this nature reflects very poorly on the Registrant and is indicative of a moral failure on his part. Moreover, these actions bring shame not only to the Registrant himself but also upon the broader profession. This is conduct which the broader profession of social workers and social service workers would surely find disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional.

Penalty submissions

- [17] College counsel presented to the Panel a Joint Submission as to Penalty ("**Joint Submission**") asking this Panel make an order that:
1. The Registrant shall be reprimanded by the Discipline Committee and the fact and nature of the reprimand shall be recorded on the College's Register.
 2. The Registrar shall be directed to revoke the Registrant's certificate of registration.
 3. The period of time during which the Registrant may not apply to the College for a new certificate of registration shall be fixed at five years from the date of the Discipline Committee's Order.
 4. The Discipline Committee's finding and Order (or a summary 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.
 5. The Member shall pay costs to the College in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) within six months of the Discipline Committee's Order.

[18] In support of the terms contained in the Joint Submission, College counsel reviewed each component of the proposed penalty explaining why, in the College's view, these terms were necessary and commensurate with the seriousness of the misconduct found in this case. We agree with College counsel and review the basis for each term in our reasons below.

Penalty decision

[19] 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 all five of its terms before the conclusion of the hearing.

Reasons for penalty decision

[20] The Panel has jurisdiction to impose the terms proposed in the Joint Submission by way of section 26 of the Act.

[21] This is a case involving a serious boundary violation which was sexual in nature. Any penalty that follows must be consistent in severity with the seriousness of what occurred. None of the provisions contained in the Joint Submission are inconsistent with penalties found in other matters with comparable facts.

[22] A reprimand is required to enable the Panel to convey its deep disapproval of the Registrant's conduct. Ordinarily, a reprimand should be delivered orally and directly to a registrant but in circumstances of the Registrant's absence, it can be appropriate to deliver a reprimand in writing. The Panel is satisfied that this is an appropriate case to deliver a written reprimand, which is appended to these reasons.

[23] Revocation is also necessary in this case. Despite that the Registrant was no longer providing social service work to C1 by the time he contacted her on social media, the Panel agrees with the College that this was nonetheless a grave boundary violation. The Registrant abused his position of trust and authority and despite the passage of some time in this matter, the patient/service provider dynamic was still intact when the Registrant approached C1 romantically.

[24] Registrants must be deterred from engaging in sexualized behaviour with vulnerable individuals. In addition to revocation, a five-year ban on applying for reinstatement is appropriate. The Panel notes College counsel's submissions about the approach taken in other Colleges that are governed by the *Regulated Health Professions Act 1991*. This Panel agrees that penalties for sexual misconduct should be consistent with the approaches taken by *RHPA* colleges in sexual abuse matters. The combination of revocation with a five year prohibition on re-application is necessary in this matter.

[25] The Panel also agrees that deterrence necessitates the publication of the Registrant's name and that this not only serves the principles of general and specific deterrence but also serves the public protection interests of the College.

- [26] The Panel notes that the Registrant apparently apologized to C1 after she revealed to him that she had a boyfriend and similarly accepts College counsel’s submission that there is no evidence the Registrant continued his advances after C1 blocked him on social media.
- [27] Costs are also appropriate in this matter. The membership at large should not bear the full burden of the cost to investigate and prosecute this matter. The amount proposed has been agreed on by the parties and the Panel has no concerns with its propriety.
- [28] The Panel notes that in cases like this where the parties have presented a Joint Submission, the Panel’s ability to reject the joint position is limited unless the Panel is satisfied that the public interest may be undermined by the proposed terms. The Panel has no such concerns in this matter. The penalty proposed is clearly not inconsistent with public safety or the public interest.

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

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Charlene Crews, Chair
Rita Silverthorn
Vera Mercier

Appendix A – Written Reprimand

November 15, 2023

Patrick Sweet, as part of its penalty order, this Discipline Panel has ordered that you be given a reprimand.

The fact that you have received this 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 used your position of power and authority to exploit a client, whom you knew to be vulnerable, and you prioritized your own needs ahead of your client's.
- Your ongoing campaign of social media messaging demonstrated that your intentions were inappropriate from the first online contact and that you failed to identify the conflict of interest and boundary violations which continued on a progressive basis over a 7-month period.
- Your actions will have a long-lasting impact on the client and may negatively impact their ability to trust service providers in the future.
- You have failed to demonstrate insight into how your actions impacted the client or an appreciation of the negative reflection that conduct will have on the profession as a whole, as well as the public's perceived confidence in the profession.

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.

We need to make it clear to you that your conduct is unacceptable.

Of special concern to us is that you attempted to engage the client in a personal relationship commenced within weeks of conducting a suicide risk assessment, thus, highlighting the client's vulnerability and the inherent power imbalance in the client/worker relationship.

It is necessary for us to use this reprimand as an opportunity to impress upon you the seriousness of your misconduct.

We have ordered the penalty of revocation, which is the most serious penalty this Panel can impose.