

COPY

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN PSYCHOLOGY

IN THE MATTER OF:

CATHERINE L. COON, M.S.

CASE NO. 99-02

CONSENT DECREE

Comes the Arkansas Board of Examiners in Psychology ("ABEP") in agreement with Catherine L. Coon, M.S. ("Respondent"), and state as grounds for this Consent Decree as follows:

FINDINGS OF FACT

I.

Respondent is currently practicing as a *bona fide applicant* psychological examiner. Her "temporary permit" for such practice expires August 31, 1999.

II.

On October 28, 1998, while within the scope of her employment with Charter BHS of Little Rock, Respondent issued a report of psychological evaluation to the Garland County DHS Office of an adult client of another psychologist (unnamed) who was also supplying professional services to the children of that client for at least three years. In said report Respondent suggested that a new therapist could provide a "fresh view" and also stated that it was unethical to continue to counsel a family after several years with no observable improvement, opining that the family's current status showed deterioration despite the provided counseling. The report was signed by Respondent but did not contain a signature of any supervising psychologist. The service-providing psychologist filed a complaint (99-02) on or about January 13, 1999, regarding that

report, noting his having taken offense at the comments about his ethics and questioning the basis of Respondent's conclusions about the current status of his clients.

III.

On January 15, 1999, Respondent underwent her oral examination for full licensure as a psychological examiner. At that time, it was noted that Respondent had not filed any required Supervision Reports with ABEP throughout the period of her *bfa* practice. When questioned about the lack of supervisor documentation, Respondent indicated that she was not providing any services that would require supervision. Respondent was neither passed nor failed as a result of that oral examination, due to concerns about Respondent's knowledge and awareness of legal supervision requirements, but was, instead, invited to re-sit for the next oral exam in April 1999. On February 1, 1999, Respondent submitted a letter to ABEP outlining the nature of services she was providing under her employment with Charter BHS and indicating the arrangements she had now made for supervision by a psychologist, including individual and group supervision encounters and the countersigning of professional reports by the supervisor, as well as submission of supervision report forms on a quarterly basis.

IV.

Having been provided the complaint of the psychologist as referenced hereinabove (II), Respondent filed a response with ABEP to that complaint on 3/22/99, indicating that she stood by the contents of the report in question but noting that she had not intended to make personal allegations against anyone (not having known the identity of the therapist at the time of making the report) and noting that her reference to ethics was made to support her recommendation for a change in therapists. That response contained no admission of any ethical violation or

wrongdoing. ABEP's Screening Committee considered this response to be wholly inadequate in terms of her recognition of problems involved in this matter and the need for supervision for the services that were being supplied. Accordingly, on May 13, 1999, Assistant Attorney General [redacted] issued a letter to Respondent proposing a number of conditions for settlement of this matter to avoid the necessity of a hearing and to assist Respondent in becoming licensed as a psychological examiner. On June 3, 1999, Respondent corresponded back to Mr. [redacted] accepting all six (6) of the enumerated conditions proposed to her, including the need to take and successfully complete an ABEP-approved three-hour transcript quality graduate level psychology ethics course. Subsequently, Respondent proffered a substitution in the latter course requirement, proposing instead an Independent Studies approach. That substitution was denied by ABEP, at the Screening Committee's recommendation, at its meeting on 7/23/99. ABEP adopted the motion that Respondent was to comply with the following, including all of the resolution terms of the original May 13th proposal: 1) Respondent must supply to ABEP evidence of her enrollment in either of the previously accepted graduate-level ethics courses for the Fall semester no later than September 1, 1999 (failing such proof, the *hfa* permit to practice would expire on that date; 2) Respondent was to supply to ABEP a signed copy of a Consent Order containing the terms of the original proposed resolution no later than August 20, 1999; 3) upon receipt of the signed Order and payment of the applicable temporary permit fee, Respondent's *hfa* status would be extended through the next scheduled oral examination in January 2000; and 4) failure in meeting any terms of the motion or the original proposed resolution's conditions would result in the scheduling of a disciplinary hearing in this case.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

I.

Based upon the Findings of Fact and upon careful review, ABEP hereby finds that the Respondent has violated *Arkansas Code Annotated* §§17-97-102(C) and -310(8), as well as Standards 1.04(b), 1.06, 1.14, 1.20(b), 2.01(b), 4.04, 7.02, and 8.01 of the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* adopted by ABEP as part of its Rules & Regulations.

II.

Respondent is in need of both further training in ethics and a supervisor for the services she is supplying, with more intensive supervision provisions, in order to be permitted to extend her temporary permit under the *bfa* status.

ORDER

I.

Respondent shall comply with the following:

1. Enrollment in a graduate-level ABEP-approved three-hour transcript quality psychology ethics course no later than the Fall 1999 semester, with proof of such enrollment being supplied to ABEP on or before September 1, 1999, and with required successful completion of such course at a "C" grade or better;
2. Submission to ABEP's oral examination for licensure as a psychological examiner at the first opportunity after completion of the aforementioned ethics course, with such submission anticipated being in January 2000, and with successful completion of same;
3. Obtainment of an ABEP-approved supervisor, with supervision to occur at a more

intensive level than might be the norm, including at least weekly face-to-face individual supervision sessions of at least one (1) hour in length each, until Respondent has successfully passed the oral examination or the new, extended temporary permit has expired, whichever is a lesser period;

4. Timely filing of quarterly supervision reports with ABEP;

5. Purchase of a new temporary (*bfa*) permit on or before September 1, 1999, that will extend Respondent's current *bfa* status only through January 31, 2000; and

6. Sign this Consent Decree on or before August 20, 1999.

Should any of the foregoing terms not be met and/or successfully completed, Respondent's current *bfa* temporary permit, or any extension of same, shall expire either as of August 31, 1999, or at the point of failure, whichever might be applicable and earlier. Such failure will also result in a disciplinary hearing on the complaint and/or any potential additional subsequent violations.

II.

This Respondent-signed Decree must be approved by ABEP at its regular meeting on August 20, 1999, before becoming effective.

ARKANSAS BOARD OF EXAMINERS
IN PSYCHOLOGY

Catherine L. Coon

Catherine L. Coon, Respondent

8/17/99
DATED

BY: _____

Dr. _____

Chair

8/19/99
DATED