

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN PSYCHOLOGY

IN THE MATTER OF:
STEPHEN P. NICHOLS, Ph.D.

RESPONDENT
NO. 94-14

CONSENT DECREE

Comes the Arkansas Board of Examiners in Psychology in agreement with Stephen P. Nichols, Ph.D., and state as grounds for this Consent Decree as follows:

FINDING OF FACT

I.

Dr. Stephen P. Nichols is a licensed psychologist in the State of Arkansas and holds license no. 79-36P. Dr. Nichols has been licensed in the State since December 8, 1979.

II.

After the receipt of complaints from Mr. _____ and Ms. _____, Board Investigators _____ conducted an investigation of the Respondent to determine whether he had violated Act 129 of 1955 codified in A.C.A. §17-96-301 et seq. or had committed negligent or wrongful actions in the performance of his duties and/or violated the ethical standards of practice as established by the rules and regulations adopted by the Board.

III.

The investigation revealed that Dr. Nichols provided psychotherapy with the complainant, _____, from November 13, 1986 until June 16, 1994. The investigation also revealed that Dr. Nichols had provided joint psychotherapy to the complainant, _____, and his wife, _____ from May 27, 1993

until March 1, 1994. The Respondent also provided individual psychotherapy to _____ from July 21, 1993 until May 19, 1994, and _____ from August 6, 1993 until April 1, 1994.

IV.

The Respondent does not contest the fact that his relationships with the complainant _____ and with _____ constitute a violation of Principle 4.05 of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct adopted by the Board as part of its rules and regulations.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

I.

Based on the above Findings of Fact, including the Respondent's decision not to contest the claims and allegations, the Board hereby finds the Respondent has violated A.C.A. § 17-96-310(a)(8).

ORDER

I.

Respondent's license to practice psychology shall be suspended for a period of four years beginning August 1, 1995.

II.

As soon as practical, the Respondent will obtain a complete psychological evaluation by a psychologist approved by the Board and who is a nationally recognized expert in the field of victimization. Such evaluation will be at the Respondent's own expense. The evaluating psychologist will be given access to the case file, and will submit the results of the psychological evaluation to the Board.

III.

At the end of the four-year suspension, Respondent agrees that he will obtain another psychological evaluation by a psychologist approved by the Board and who is a recognized expert in the field of victimization at Respondent's own expense. The evaluating psychologist will be given access to the case file, and will submit the results of the psychological evaluation to the Board. At the end of the four-year suspension, Respondent shall be reinstated if the evaluating psychologist consulted by the Respondent is of the opinion that resumption of practice by Respondent would not create a risk of harm to any patient.

IV.

Additionally, the Respondent agrees that his practice will be supervised for a period of two years following the four-year suspension. Respondent will submit a list of psychologists to the Board of potential supervisors. The Board will choose an acceptable supervisor from the list submitted by the Respondent. Such supervision will consist of one hour a week of face-to-face contact during the first year of suspension and one hour of face-to-face contact every other week during the second year of supervision. Respondent further agrees that he will provide quarterly reports from his supervisor to the Board describing the nature of the supervisor and the status of Respondent's practice.

V.

Respondent understands that notification of this action will be made to all state and provincial licensing boards, either through the disciplinary data banks sponsored by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards or by direct notification.

VI.

Respondent shall be responsible for all costs incurred in complying with this Consent Decree.

VII.

The Respondent agrees that this document may be enforced in the Circuit Court of Pulaski County.

VIII.

This Agreement has been approved by the Board at its regular meeting on May 26, 1995.

ARKANSAS BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS

By: _____

DR.
Chair

Date

DR. STEPHEN P. NICHOLS

Date