

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA  
BOARD OF LICENSED  
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 )  
JOANNA CARR CROSS, LPCA )  
Respondent. )  
 )  
Case Number 1615 )

**CONSENT ORDER**

THIS CAUSE, coming on to be heard and being heard before the North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors (“the Board”), at its meeting on July 27-28, 2017, pursuant to a Charge Letter issued by the Ethics Review Committee of the Board on April 7, 2017; and

IT APPEARING to the Board that the Respondent has stipulated to certain facts and to the entry of a Consent Order in conformity therewith;

IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED by the undersigned Respondent and the Board that:

1. Respondent was at all times relevant to this cause a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LPCA), and is subject to the Board’s jurisdiction pursuant to the North Carolina Licensed Professional Counselors Act, Chapter 90, Article 24 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

2. Respondent admits the following:

a. As an LPCA, Respondent provided intensive in-home services in North Carolina to an 11-year old male (hereinafter client X) beginning on or about March 25, 2016, and ending on or about April 22, 2016. At the time that Respondent began providing services to client X, his client records, which included the names of his parents, among other information, were available to Respondent for Respondent’s review. In addition, the Board contends that on April 15, 2016, Respondent attended a meeting with client X’s father and the school team at client X’s school. Respondent contends that she participated in that meeting by telephone and did not speak with Client X’s father. On April 25, 2016, during her last counseling visit with client X, Respondent met with client X in his father’s home. Respondent contends that this was the first time she met Client X’s father and realized he was her romantic partner.

b. Prior to beginning to provide counseling services to client X, on or about March 2015, Respondent became involved in a romantic relationship with client X’s father, which continued during the time Respondent was providing services to client X. The relationship with client X’s father continued following Respondent’s termination of counseling services to client X. Following the termination of counseling services, Client X was present during Respondent’s social visits with his father on one or more occasions. Respondent denied knowing that client X’s father was her romantic partner until Respondent’s last meeting with client X on April 25, 2016.

c. Immediately after the meeting on April 25, 2016, Respondent disclosed to her supervisors, Mary H. Meriwether, LPC, and Courtney Owings, LCSW, that she was involved in a friendship with client X's father. Respondent did not inform either Ms. Meriwether or Ms. Owings that Respondent had been and was continuing to be involved in a romantic relationship with client X's father. When confronted by Respondent's supervisors about the romantic relationship with client X's father Respondent denied it. Respondent did not ever inform either Ms. Meriwether or Ms. Owings that she was in a romantic relationship with client X's father prior to submitting her resignation on July 21, 2016.

d. In addition, on or about July 7, 2016, during the time period that Respondent was providing intensive in-home services to another 11-year old male (hereinafter client Y), client Y sent Respondent a text message during the evening. In the text message, client Y informed Respondent that he was sad, wanted to hurt himself, got a knife, and tried to cut, but was crying so hard that he was not strong enough mentally or physically to do it so he kept scratching his arm over and over. Respondent responded to his text and informed client Y that her team and his family cared about him and that Respondent would talk with him when they were scheduled to meet during the following week. Respondent informed him by text that she would do a safety contract at the time of their session and work through everything that was going on. Respondent concluded their text interaction with him by asking if he could promise not to hurt himself between now and their next session. He did not respond to this text. Respondent contends that she further called or texted with client Y that evening to assure herself that he was not at risk for self-harm. Respondent did not, following this text interaction with client Y or at any later time, inform his guardian about his attempt to engage in self-harm behavior.

e. Respondent subsequently met with client Y on July 11, 2016, and in Respondent's service note for this session, Respondent wrote that Respondent discussed a new verbal safety contract and reviewed a safety plan in the event of self-injurious thoughts or behaviors. In this note, Respondent did not document the text interaction on July 7, 2016, with client Y. Respondent also failed to inform client Y's guardian that Respondent and he had engaged in a safety contract.

3. For the purposes of this Consent Order only, Respondent admits that the conduct described in Paragraphs 2a through 2e above, constitutes violations of Sections A.5.a., A.5.c., C.2.e., I.1.b., and I.2.c. of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (2014), and violations of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-340 (a)(7) and the applicable provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-340 (a)(9) of the NC Licensed Professional Counselors Act.

4. The Board and Respondent wish to avoid the time and the costs associated with full litigation of this matter and, in lieu of any proceedings, enter into this Consent Order.

5. Respondent expressly waives notice of hearing, a hearing, the making of findings of fact and conclusions of law, and all further proceedings before the Board to which the Respondent may be entitled by law. Respondent further agrees that presentation of this Consent Order to the Board for

approval shall not constitute improper ex parte communication between the Board and its counsel, or the Board and its staff, nor require the recusal of the members of the Board from consideration of this matter before the full Board, should a hearing be required in this case.

6. Respondent forever releases the State of North Carolina, the North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, and all its members, officials, agents, representatives and employees, both past and present, in their individual or official capacities from any and all liability, suits, claims, and causes of action, arising prior to or as a result of the execution of this Consent Order.

7. Respondent waives the right to seek judicial review or to otherwise challenge the validity of this Consent Order in any court. Respondent understands and agrees that this Consent Order shall be effective only after approval by the full Board and signature of its Chairperson.

8. This Consent Order contains the entire agreement between the undersigned, there being no agreement of any kind, verbal or otherwise, which varies, alters, or adds to this Consent Order.

Based upon the record and the foregoing stipulations and findings,

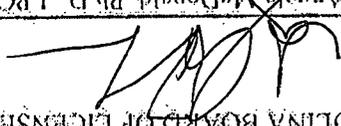
NOW, THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

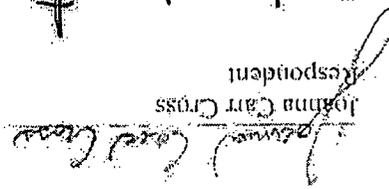
- I. The license of the undersigned Respondent is hereby REVOKED.
- II. No later than August 10, 2017, Respondent shall cease to engage in any activities that meet the definition of the practice of counseling under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-330(a)(3), or falls under the prohibitions set forth in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-331.
- III. No later than August 11, 2017, Respondent shall turn in her license to practice counseling in North Carolina to the Board. She shall mail her license to: North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Post Office Box 77819, Greensboro, North Carolina 27417.
- IV. Respondent may apply for a new license on or after August 10, 2018.
- V. Should Respondent apply to this Board for licensure at any time in the future, the Board shall have access to its entire investigative file for purposes of considering such application.
- VI. The failure of Respondent to abide by any provisions of this Consent Order shall result in further action by the Board, including seeking an injunction in Superior Court, in the discretion of the Board.
- VII. The Board shall maintain this Consent Order as a public record pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §§132-1 and 90-340(f) and shall provide copies to the American Counseling Association and the National Board of Certified Counselors, and to other agencies or individuals, as required by law.

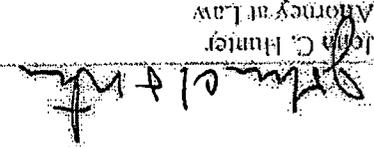
This the 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2017.

CONSENTED TO BY:

NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

BY:  Angela McDonald, Ph.D., LPCS  
Board Chairperson  
date 7/27/17

BY:  Joanna Carr Cross  
Respondent  
date 7/24/17

 John C. Hunter  
Attorney at Law  
Attorney for Respondent  
date 7/24/17