

Summary of Discipline Committee's decision

Application for Consent Revocation

Member: Eileen Carey

Hearing date: November 27, 2020

Decision date: December 4, 2020

Eileen Carey, Registration # 512, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, was initially registered as a social worker with the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers (the predecessor to the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers) in September 1992.

In 2018, Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) received two complaints regarding Ms. Carey's practice and conduct as a social worker at a private therapy clinic in Halifax, Nova Scotia from 2014 to 2018 involving Client A. The complaints also concerned Ms. Carey's conduct with Client A outside of the client/social worker relationship and following the termination of the client/social worker relationship. A lengthy investigation ensued.

During the investigative process, Ms. Carey signed a voluntary undertaking in June 2018, where she agreed to refrain from any direct client practice outside of her supervised employment. Ms. Carey also voluntarily engaged in treatment services with a psychologist at this time.

Further, during the investigation process, the Complaints Committee imposed interim restrictions on Ms. Carey's social work practice pending the final disposition of the complaints. Ms. Carey's practice was restricted to direct one-on-one supervision of all clinical sessions conducted by Ms. Carey. No concerns were ever noted during the one-on-one supervision period.

Ms. Carey did not contest the following allegations with respect to Client A:

With respect to the care provided to Client A from January 2014 to August 2016, Ms. Carey:

1. Failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries by developing a friendship with Client A; attending public events with Client A; texting with Client A outside of the therapeutic role; inappropriately sharing personal information with Client A for non-therapeutic reasons; and exchanging and accepting gifts.
2. Engaged in a dual/multiple role relationship by developing a friendship with Client A and failing to appropriately address Client A's feelings toward her.
3. Engaged in physical contact by engaging in Access Consciousness practices with Client A, a non-evidence-based practice, which involved reciprocal touch during "energy trades".

4. Failed to consult colleagues when appropriate.
5. Failed to refer Client A to another professional when professional boundaries were crossed.
6. Failed to document the encounters.
7. Utilized practices that were not evidence-based and/or were outside her scope of practice, including Access Consciousness.

Ms. Carey did not contest that the above allegations amounted to professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming the profession, incompetence and a breach of the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

Disposition

The Application for Consent Revocation was presented to the College's Discipline Committee for consideration. The Committee heard submissions from legal counsel for the College, Ryan Baxter, and legal counsel for Ms. Carey, Ronald Pizzo. Ms. Carey did not attend the hearing.

The Committee noted that consenting to the Application for Consent Revocation was consistent with the objects of the College set out at section 5 of the *Social Workers Act*. The Committee stated that the Application served the public interest, preserved the integrity of the social work profession, and maintained public confidence in the profession.

The Discipline Committee consented to the following disposition:

1. Ms. Carey's social work registration with NSCSW is permanently revoked.
2. Ms. Carey will no longer refer to herself as a social worker.
3. Ms. Carey shall pay a contribution toward the costs incurred by NSCSW in the investigation of this matter in the amount of \$15,000.00, on terms agreed upon by the parties.