

IN THE MATTER OF	*	BEFORE THE STATE
JUSTIN LINKSZ, LCSW-C	*	BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK
Respondent	*	EXAMINERS
License Number: 16603	*	Case No. 2016-2228
* * * * *		

ORDER FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION

Pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Govt. §10-226 (c) (2014 Repl. Vol.), the Maryland Social Workers Act (the "Act"), Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. II §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol.), and Code Md. Regs. tit. 10, § 42.04.07, the State Board of Social Work Examiners (the "Board") hereby summarily suspends the social work license of **JUSTIN LINKSZ, LCSW-C (the "Respondent"), License Number 16603**. This Order is based on the following investigative findings, which the Board has reason to believe are true:¹

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant, the Respondent was and is licensed to practice clinical social work in the State of Maryland. The Respondent was initially licensed on June 19, 2014. His license is currently active and is scheduled to expire on October 31, 2016.
2. At all times relevant, the Respondent was employed as a social worker through an online counseling platform. The Respondent provided online counseling services to clients with whom he was matched.

¹ The statements regarding the Respondent's conduct are only intended to provide the Respondent with notice of the basis of the suspension. They are not intended as, and do not necessarily represent a completed description of the evidence, either documentary or testimonial, to be offered against the Respondent in this matter.

3. On or about June 29, 2016, the Board received a complaint from Client A, a former client of the Respondent's, alleging a boundary violation. Client A resides outside of Maryland.²

4. Thereafter, the Board initiated an investigation.

5. According to the Board's investigation, the Respondent provided online counseling services to Client A from the fall of 2014 until June 2016. The Respondent diagnosed Client A with multiple, severe psychological disorders. Client A reported a history of sexual abuse by a family member.

6. The Respondent and Client A communicated via email and, on one occasion, on Google chat and telephone. The Respondent and Client A never met in person.

7. Client A provided the Board with her email exchanges with the Respondent.

8. On August 4, 2016, the Board's investigator conducted a telephone interview of Client A under oath. Client A stated that early on in the therapeutic relationship she disclosed to the Respondent that she had developed romantic feelings for him and did not know how to deal with her feelings.

9. According to emails provided by Client A, on November 21, 2015, the Respondent and Client A were engaged in an email conversation during which Client A again disclosed that she had romantic feelings for the Respondent.

10. The Respondent responded

² In order to maintain confidentiality, names will not be used in this Order. The Respondent may obtain a list of the names referenced in the Charges by contacting the Administrative Prosecutor.

As you know you can share whatever you want with me. We are all human and have thoughts about others we may not or should not have, but it happens, and is ok. It's normal. My job is to make sure not to take advantage of those thighs [sic] and feelings. To be here to help you and guide you. I'm flattered that you think of me.

11. At that time, the conversation became sexual in nature, culminating with the Respondent calling Client A on the telephone.³

12. According to Client A, the Respondent masturbated while on the telephone with her.

13. The Respondent and Client A continued their professional relationship via email until approximately late June 2016. During that time, the Respondent repeatedly engaged in inappropriate sexual conversations with Client A.

14. On August 3, 2016, the Board's investigator interviewed the Respondent under oath. The Respondent admitted to the allegations.

15. According to the Respondent, he was intoxicated when he spoke to Client A on the telephone on November 21, 2015.

16. The Respondent further admitted to telling Client A that "no matter how turned on I am, your safety and well-being comes first."

17. A review of the emails between the Respondent and Client A revealed numerous unprofessional and sexual conversations. In addition, the Respondent sent Client A pictures of himself without a shirt.

³ Client A stated that she and the Respondent continued their conversation on Google Chat at the Respondent's suggestion, but Client A deleted those messages.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Accordingly, the Board concludes that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action in this case, pursuant to Md. State Gov't Code Ann. § 10-226(c)(2)(i) (2009 Repl. Vol. and 2012 Supp.).

ORDER

Based on the foregoing, it is this 27th day of September 2016 by a majority vote of a quorum of the Board, hereby:

ORDERED that pursuant to the authority vested by Md. State Gov't Code Ann., § 10-226(c)(2), the Respondent's license to practice social work in Maryland, is hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDED**; and be it further

ORDERED that the Respondent must request a post-deprivation show cause hearing in writing **WITHIN 30 DAYS** of his receipt of this notice. The written request should be made to: Stanley E. Weinstein, Ph.D., LCSW-C, Executive Director, State Board of Social Work Examiners, 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215 with copies mailed to: Tracee Orlove Fruman, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, 300 West Preston Street, Suite 207, Baltimore, Maryland 21201, and Ari Elbaum, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, 300 West Preston Street, Suite 302, Baltimore, Maryland 21201; and be it further

ORDERED that if the Respondent fails to request a post-deprivation show cause hearing, the Respondent's license will remain suspended; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall immediately turn over to the Board all copies of his license to practice social work issued by the Board; and be it further

ORDERED that this document constitutes an Order of the Board and is therefore a public document for purposes of public disclosure, as required by Md. General Provisions Code Ann., §§ 4-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol.).

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Denise Capaci".

Denise Capaci, LCSW-C, Board Chair
State Board of Social Work Examiners