



**Nova Scotia
Board of Examiners
in Psychology**

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NOVA SCOTIA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN PSYCHOLOGY

SUMMARY OF DECISION OF HEARING COMMITTEE

RE HILARY GREEN, C10675

On April 13, 2015, the Hearing Committee of the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (“NSBEP”) accepted a Settlement Agreement agreed upon by the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology and Hilary Green, and approved by the Board’s Investigation Committee. A summary of the Settlement Agreement follows:

OVERVIEW

Hilary Green graduated in 2013 with a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology. She began working as a Psychologist, Candidate Register in June, 2013.

A client (identified herein as Client X), who experienced feelings of anxiety, loneliness and depression, and later, suicidality, was referred to Ms. Green in February, 2014. She engaged in treatment sessions with Client X between March and August, 2014. Over the course of that treatment period, Client X began to express feelings toward Ms. Green. Over the course of the summer the relationship involved the exchange of gifts, having lunch together on one occasion in public and increasingly frequent contact by phone or messages while Ms. Green was at work. Throughout this period, Ms. Green was aware of issues of transference and attachment, and documented them in her clinical notes. Ms. Green had discussions about the matter with her supervisor who was aware of the challenges of the matter.

Ms. Green engaged in one episode of sexual intimacy with Client X in August, 2014, following which the therapeutic relationship and personal relationship ended.

COMPLAINT

Matters involving the relationship of Ms. Green and Client X were referred to the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology in August, 2014. While Ms. Green had removed herself from practice in August, she formally agreed on September 26, 2014, not to return to practice until further decision of the Investigation Committee.

After completing the investigation of the complaint, the Investigation Committee referred the following allegations to a hearing:

- (a) In violation of Ethical Standards 11.27 and 11.33 and Principle 9.1 of the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology Standards of Professional Conduct, Hilary Green engaged in a personal and sexual relationship with a client;
- (b) In violation of Ethical Standards 11.2 and 11.10, Hilary Green failed to evaluate how her own experiences, attitudes, and stresses influenced her interactions with Client "X" and failed to integrate this awareness into efforts to benefit and not harm Client "X".

ADMISSIONS

Ms. Green admits to the charges referred by the Investigation Committee and admits that her conduct constitutes professional misconduct under the *Psychologists Act*.

DISPOSITION

Ms. Green's registration as a candidate will be suspended for a period of one year or such later time as she satisfies conditions set by the Hearing Committee. The period of suspension is retroactive to September 26, 2014, the date when Ms. Green agreed to remove herself from practice as a candidate.

Before the lifting of the suspension, Ms. Green must engage in meetings with health professionals designed to provide counselling on the ethical violations admitted in this matter, and with respect to personal circumstances that may have influenced Ms. Green's actions in this matter. If the results of these assessments suggest Ms. Green is fit to return to practice, the suspension of her license to practice shall be lifted on September 25, 2015. Upon return to practice, the supervisor of Ms. Green's candidacy will be provided with relevant information with respect to this matter.

Ms. Green shall pay costs to the Board in the amount of \$4,000 as partial contribution towards the Board's costs in the investigation and conclusion of this matter, upon such terms as agreed upon with the Board.

REASONS FOR ACCEPTING SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Having reviewed all of the material provided in this matter, the Hearing Committee of the Board is satisfied that the public interest is protected by the above agreement. Sexual misconduct is a serious violation of the ethical standards required of a psychologist. There is a significant power imbalance between a person providing therapy, and the client. Such actions are contrary to the Board's Guidelines: Sexual Misconduct by Psychologists.

While this misconduct is significant, the Hearing Committee took into account mitigating factors that must be borne in mind. Ms. Green was new to the practice of psychology and was faced with a complex and challenging client. Her reports from her supervisor were positive throughout her time as a candidate. Ms. Green readily admitted her professional misconduct and cooperated with the Board throughout this process. The Hearing Committee is satisfied that the remedial counselling embodied in this decision, if successfully completed, will provide Ms. Green with the knowledge and tools to enable her to avoid such situations in the future.

Ms. Green expressed sincere remorse throughout this matter. All of these factors, together with the absence of any prior disciplinary history, leads the Hearing Committee to conclude that the agreed upon disposition satisfies the objectives of the Board to ensure that the public interest in the practice of psychology is protected and upheld.