

**IN THE MATTER OF  
KARL HONKALA, LCADC  
Respondent**

**License Number: LCA002**

**\* BEFORE THE  
\* STATE BOARD OF  
\* PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS  
\* AND THERAPISTS  
\* Case Number: 2014-12**

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**ORDER FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION  
OF LICENSE TO PRACTICE CLINICAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELING**

The Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the "Board"), hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDS** the license of Karl Honkala, LCADC (the "Respondent") License Number LCA002, to practice clinical alcohol and drug counseling in the State of Maryland. The Board takes such action pursuant to its authority under Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2)(i) (2009 Repl. Vol. & 2013 Supp.), concluding that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action.

**INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS**

Based on information received by, and made known to the Board, and the investigatory information obtained by, received by and made known to and available to the Board, including the instances described below, the Board has reason to believe that the following facts are true:<sup>1</sup>

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was and is licensed to practice clinical alcohol and drug counseling in the State of Maryland. The Respondent

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

was originally licensed to practice clinical alcohol and drug counseling in Maryland on December 14, 1999. Presently, his license is scheduled to expire on January 31, 2016.

2. At the time of the incidents described herein, the Respondent practiced clinical alcohol and drug counseling in Mechanicsville, Maryland. At all times relevant, the Respondent was the owner and executive director of a private counseling practice.
3. On or about February 24, 2014, the Board received a complaint from a Senior Agent (identified as "Agent T")<sup>2</sup> with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Corrections ("MDPSC") alleging that the Respondent had engaged in sexual impropriety with a client ("Client A") who was on criminal probation for a drug related conviction.
4. On the same date, February 24, 2014, Client A filed a complaint with the Board alleging she and the Respondent had engaged in sexual contact after she was unable to pay for her counseling services.
5. Shortly thereafter, the Board opened an investigation of the Respondent, the results of which are set forth in pertinent part below.
6. The Board's regulations, pursuant to Code Regs. Md. 10.58.03.09 *et seq.*, prohibit licensees from engaging in sexual misconduct with a client or a former client. Sexual misconduct pursuant to Code Regs. Md. 10.58.03.09A includes but is not limited to:

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<sup>2</sup> In order to maintain confidentiality, patient and employee names will not be used in this document, but will be provided to the Respondent on request.

(2) Sexual exploitation;

...

(4) Sexual behavior [.]

7. As a result of the Board's investigation relating to the Respondent's actions as set forth in pertinent part below, the Board voted to summarily suspend his license to practice clinical alcohol and drug counseling pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2)(i) (2009 Repl. Vol. & 2013 Supp.), concluding that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action.

#### **INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS RELATING TO CLIENT A**

8. Client A is a female in her 40's who was convicted in June 2013 of burglary and drug possession. She is presently on supervised probation for her criminal offenses and reports to the MDPSC Office of Community Supervision three times weekly.
9. The Court ordered Client A to undergo an evaluation and treatment for substance abuse, and assigned the Respondent as her clinical drug and alcohol treatment counselor. The Respondent evaluated Client A on August 29, 2013 and her records reflect the Respondent treated her through February 3, 2014.

#### **Complaint Filed by Agent T**

10. Agent T stated in her complaint filed with the Board that on February 14, 2014, Client A reported to her that she had been having an intimate relationship with the Respondent by performing oral sex on him. Client A stated that in December 2013, they attempted, but were unable to engage in sexual intercourse due to the Respondent's large size.

11. Client A reported to Agent T that she began performing oral sex on the Respondent around November 2013. The sexual contact took place approximately twice weekly through the middle of February. At the time, Client A was unable to afford payment for the Respondent's services, and the Respondent stated, "we will work something out" referring to the money Client A owed to him.
12. Client A reported to Agent T that the sexual contact took place in lieu of scheduled individual therapy sessions.

#### **Interview of Client A**

13. On April 28, 2014, the Board's staff interviewed Client A under oath.
14. Client A was court ordered to attend counseling sessions with the Respondent three times weekly: on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. She was to attend individual and group therapy sessions with the Respondent.
15. The fee for the counseling sessions was \$50 weekly.
16. Around November 2013, Client A was unable to regularly pay her session fee. Client A owed the Respondent \$400.00, and he asked her for payment. Client A told the Respondent she did not have the money. The Respondent said, "Don't worry about it. We'll work something out."
17. Client A stated that the Respondent told her, "You do me a favor. I'll do you a favor." When Client A asked the Respondent what she would have to do, he said, "I think you know what I mean" and looked down at his pants.

18. According to Client A, she performed oral sex on the Respondent from approximately November through mid-February, during approximately ten to twelve scheduled therapy sessions.
19. On an occasion prior to sexual contact, in September 2013, when Client A missed a session for back treatment, the Respondent wrote a letter to the court reporting that Client A had been non-compliant.<sup>3</sup>
20. After that, however, even though Client A was unable to pay the fee, and did not attend the group therapy sessions as ordered by the court, the Respondent did not report Client A to the Court as “non-compliant.”
21. According to Client A, the Respondent discussed personal issues with Client A instead of discussing her recovery. The Respondent shared with Client A that he liked boats. Sometime around November 2013, the Respondent purchased a boat (a Boston Whaler) from Client A’s father for \$1,800.00.<sup>4</sup>
22. The Respondent told Client A that he wanted her to move in with him after her probation had been terminated.
23. On or about February 11, 2014, Client A reported the Respondent’s conduct to personnel in the probation office including the Case Manager with Adult Recovery Court (“EL”) and Agent T.

#### **Interview of K.A.**

24. On April 28, 2014, the Board’s staff interviewed K.A. under oath.

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<sup>3</sup> Client A stated that a sign in the Respondent’s office notified clients that the counselor was required to report non-compliance to the court if a client owed \$100.00 in fees.

<sup>4</sup> On November 13, 2013, the Respondent had written a letter to the Board requesting an ethical opinion on his purchase of the boat.

25. At all times relevant to this Order, K.A. was Client A's housemate. K.A. stated that he had known Client A for over 20 years.
26. K.A. had often driven Client A to her appointments with the Respondent.
27. K.A. stated that Client A acted nervous when she had an appointment with the Respondent, and frequently made excuses as to why she did not want to attend the appointments.
28. K.A. noticed that after Client A's appointments with the Respondent, Client A was emotional and often cried.
29. K.A. stated that the Respondent would call Client A before her sessions to ensure she was coming, and that he often called her at 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. during the evening.

#### **Interview of Respondent**

30. On May 21, 2014, the Board's staff interviewed the Respondent under oath. He was represented by counsel.
31. The Respondent stated that he provided counseling to Client A from August 2013 through February 2014. Client A had been referred to him by the "drug court."
32. The Respondent stated he only billed Client A for services from August 2013 through November 7, 2013. He stopped billing Client A because she could not afford his services.<sup>5</sup>
33. The Respondent stated that Client A was under a lot of pressure from the drug court, and that if she received a "non-compliance" she would have to serve four years in prison.

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<sup>5</sup> Receipts for payments reflect that Client A made a total of seven payments to the Respondent for services rendered from August 29, 2013 through November 7, 2013.

34. The Respondent stated that he had engaged in sexual intercourse with Client A on his desk in his office. Additionally, he admitted to having had "sexual acts" with Client A five or six times in his office or his waiting area.
35. The Respondent stated that Client A had initiated the sexual acts by exposing her bra and breasts to show him a tattoo on her left breast. According to the Respondent, Client A performed oral sex on him during her next appointment.
36. The Respondent described Client A as sexually aggressive, and that he was "weak."
37. The Respondent acknowledged that he had purchased a boat from Client A's father.
38. The Respondent acknowledged that he had telephoned Client A at various hours.

#### **CONCLUSION OF LAW**

Based on the foregoing facts, the Board concludes that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively require emergency action in this case, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226 (c)(2)(i) (2009 Repl. vol. & 2013 Supp.).

#### **ORDER**

Based on the foregoing, it is by a majority of the Board considering this case:

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

**ORDERED** that the Respondent has the opportunity to appear before the Board for a post-deprivation show cause hearing. A request for a post-deprivation show

cause hearing must be in writing and be made **WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS** of service of this Order. The written request should be made to:

Tracey DeShields, Executive Director  
Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors & Therapists  
4201 Patterson Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Please copy:

Dawn L. Rubin, Assistant Attorney General  
Maryland Office of the Attorney General  
Health Occupations Prosecution & Litigation Division  
300 West Preston Street, Suite 201  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

and

Ari Elbaum, Assistant Attorney General  
Maryland Office of the Attorney General  
300 West Preston Street, Suite 302  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201; and it is further

**ORDERED** that if the Respondent fails to request a post-deprivation show cause hearing in writing, or if the Respondent requests a post-deprivation show cause hearing but fails to appear when scheduled, the Respondent's license will remain **SUSPENDED**; and it is further

**ORDERED** that on presentation of this Order, the Respondent **SHALL SURRENDER** to the Board, the following items:

- (1) the Respondent's original Maryland License LCA002;
- (2) the Respondent's wallet card and wall certificate; and it is further

**ORDERED** that this is a Final Order of the Board and, as such, is a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-611 *et seq.*



6/9/14  
Date

Carol A. Deel LCPC, LCMFT

Carol A. Deel, LCPC, LCMFT, Chair  
Maryland State Board of Professional  
Counselors and Therapists