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BEFORE THE ARIZONA BOARD

OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH EXAMINERS

In the Matter of:

Erik M. Ish, LAC Applicant, Licensed Associate Counselor, In the State of Arizona.

RESPONDENT

CASE NO. 2024-0095

CONSENT AGREEMENT FOR ISSUANCE OF LICENSE

In the interest of a prompt and speedy settlement of the above captioned matter, consistent with the public interest, statutory requirements and responsibilities of the Arizona State Board of Behavioral Health Examiners ("Board"), and pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 32-3281(F) and 41-1092.07(F)(5), Erik M. Ish ("Respondent") and the Board enter into this Consent Agreement, Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order ("Consent Agreement") as a final disposition of this matter.

RECITALS

Respondent understands and agrees that:

- Any record prepared in this matter, all investigative materials prepared or received by the Board concerning the allegations, and all related materials and exhibits may be retained in the Board's file pertaining to this matter.
- 2. Respondent has the right to a formal administrative hearing at which Respondent can present evidence and cross examine the State's witnesses. Respondent hereby irrevocably waives their right to such formal hearing concerning these allegations and irrevocably waives their right to any rehearing or judicial review relating to the allegations contained in this Consent Agreement.
- Respondent has the right to consult with an attorney prior to entering into this Consent Agreement.

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- 4. Respondent acknowledges and agrees that upon signing this Consent Agreement and returning it to the Board's Executive Director, Respondent may not revoke their acceptance of this Consent Agreement or make any modifications to it. Any modification of this original document is ineffective and void unless mutually approved by the parties in writing.
- 5. The findings contained in the Findings of Fact portion of this Consent Agreement are conclusive evidence of the facts stated herein between only Respondent and the Board for the final disposition of this matter and may be used for purposes of determining sanctions in any future disciplinary matter.
- 6. This Consent Agreement is subject to the Board's approval, and will be effective only when the Board accepts it. In the event the Board in its discretion does not approve this Consent Agreement, this Consent Agreement is withdrawn and shall be of no evidentiary value, nor shall it be relied upon or introduced in any disciplinary action by any party hereto, except that Respondent agrees that should the Board reject this Consent Agreement and this case proceeds to hearing, Respondent shall assert no claim that the Board was prejudiced by its review and discussion of this document or of any records relating thereto.
- 7. Respondent acknowledges and agrees that the acceptance of this Consent Agreement is solely to settle this Board matter and does not preclude the Board from instituting other proceedings as may be appropriate now or in the future. Furthermore, and notwithstanding any language in this Consent Agreement, this Consent Agreement does not preclude in any way any other state agency or officer or political subdivision of this state from instituting proceedings, investigating claims, or taking legal action as may be appropriate now or in the future relating to this matter or other matters concerning Respondent, including but not limited to violations of Arizona's Consumer Fraud Act. Respondent acknowledges that, other than with respect to the Board, this Consent Agreement makes no representations, implied or

otherwise, about the views or intended actions of any other state agency or officer or political subdivision of the state relating to this matter or other matters concerning Respondent.

- 8. Respondent understands that once the Board approves and signs this Consent Agreement, it is a public record that may be publicly disseminated as a formal action of the Board, and that it shall be reported as required by law to the National Practitioner Data Bank.
- 9. Respondent further understands that any violation of this Consent Agreement constitutes unprofessional conduct pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-3251(16)(n) and may result in disciplinary action pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-3281.
- 10. The Board therefore retains jurisdiction over Respondent and may initiate disciplinary action against Respondent if it determines that they have failed to comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement or of the practice act.

The Board issues the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

Complaint 2019-0083

- 1. Respondent is the holder of License No. LAC-16889 for the practice of counseling in Arizona.
- 2. From 02/18 01/19, Respondent worked at a residential drug and alcohol treatment facility ("Agency"), where he provided behavioral health services to an adult male client ("Client").
- 3 According to Respondent's progress notes for Client, Respondent was fully aware that Client was at high risk for relapse.
- 4. With full knowledge of Client's high risk for relapse and vulnerabilities, Respondent escorted Client in his personal vehicle to lunch, while in possession of prescribed medical marijuana.

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- 5. Respondent represents that it was a common practice for employees at Agency to transport clients in their private vehicle.
- 6. Respondent's decision to be in possession of marijuana while working with clients was further problematic given Agency's policies, which provide:
 - a. Use of substances, whether on or off the job, can adversely affect an employee's performance, efficiency, safety and health.
 - b. Possession, use, or being under the influence of an illegal or controlled substance while on the job is prohibited.

7. According to Respondent:

- a. He denies being under the influence of an illegal or controlled substance while on the job.
- b. On 01/09/19, Respondent knew Client was going to be leaving Agency soon and that this would be their last individual session together.
- Respondent asked Client if he would like to get some pizza for lunch, and Client replied yes.
- d. The only time that Client would have been alone in Respondent's car is when he was at the gas station and went inside.
- e. Respondent had a prescribed medical marijuana cigarette in the center console between the two front seats.
- f. The cigarette was stored loosely in the console.
- g. When asked why Respondent would have marijuana in the center console, without it being wrapped or stored in a container, Respondent indicated "I don't have a good answer for that."
- 8. Although Respondent was aware that Client took his marijuana, Respondent failed to inform Agency of the matter.

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- Agency became aware when Client's subsequent treatment provider contacted
 Agency and shared that Client admitted to using marijuana after finding it in Respondent's vehicle.
 - 10. Respondent was immediately terminated from Agency.
- 11. Following Respondent's termination, Respondent's caseload was distributed to other Agency providers.
- 12. One of those clients ("Client 2") reported that he only had 2 sessions with Respondent.
- 13. In review of Client 2's clinical record, it was discovered that Respondent documented 6 individual sessions with Client 2.
- 14. When questioned about this matter by Board staff, Respondent acknowledged falsifying several sessions with Client 2.
- 15. During the investigation, Respondent stated that Agency counselors would sometimes write a session note based on multiple interactions with a client during the course of a week in lieu of holding a separate session and writing a note for that session.
- 16. Respondent acknowledges that Agency billed Client 2's insurance based on session notes that Respondent entered.
- 17. In defense of his Board complaint, Respondent solicited the participation of several former clients by requesting that they write letters for the benefit of Respondent's defense.
- 18. Respondent failed to notify the Board of his employment with Agency as required.
- 19. Respondent subsequently signed a Consent Agreement with the Board which was executed on 05/02/19.

Present

- 20. In 06/19, due to personal and financial reasons, Respondent determined that he was unable to comply with the terms and conditions and therefore, requested an Interim Consent Agreement, which would temporarily suspend his license.
- 21. On 08/31/19, Respondent's LAC license expired and was closed, expired while under a consent agreement and Respondent failed to renew his LAC at that time within the reinstatement period.
 - 22. In 09/23, Respondent submitted a new LAC application with the Board.
- 23. After Board staff spoke with Respondent, he disclosed that he did not complete any of the stipulations of the previous Consent Agreement.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1. The Board has jurisdiction over Respondent pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-3251 *et seq.* and the rules promulgated by the Board relating to Respondent's professional practice as a licensed behavioral health professional.
- 2. The conduct and circumstances described in the Findings of Fact constitute a violation of A.R.S. § 32-3251(16)(I), engaging in any conduct, practice or condition that impairs the ability of the licensee to safely and competently practice the licensee's profession.
- 3. The conduct and circumstances described in the Findings of Fact constitute a violation of A.R.S. § 32-3251(16)(b), using fraud or deceit in connection with rendering services as a licensee or in establishing qualifications pursuant to this chapter.
- 4. The conduct and circumstances described in the Findings of Fact constitute a violation of A.R.S. § 32-3251(16)(x), exploiting a client, former client or supervisee. For the purposes of this subdivision, "exploiting" means taking advantage of a professional relationship with a client, former client or supervisee for the benefit or profit of the licensee.

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5. The conduct and circumstances described in the Findings of Fact constitute a violation of A.R.S. § 32-3251(16)(ii), violating any federal or state law, rule or regulation applicable to the practice of behavioral health, as it relates to:

A.A.C. R4-6-205. Change of Contact Information.

<u>ORDER</u>

Based upon the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the parties agree to the provisions and penalties imposed as follows:

- 1. Respondent's application to be a licensed associate counselor is approved.
- 2. Th license issued to Respondent pursuant to paragraph 1 will be immediately placed on probation for 24 months.
- 3. Respondent shall not practice under their license issued pursuant to paragraph 1 unless they are fully compliant with all terms and conditions in this Consent Agreement. If, for any reason, Respondent is unable to comply with the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement, they shall immediately notify the Board in writing and shall not practice under their license until they submit a written request to the Board to re-commence compliance with this Consent Agreement. All such requests shall be pre-approved by the Board Chair or designee.
- 4. In the event that Respondent is unable to comply with the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement, all remaining time frames shall be tolled and remain tolled until such time as they are granted approval to re-commence compliance with the Consent Agreement.

Practice Restriction

5. While on probation, if Respondent engages in the practice of behavioral health, Respondent shall do so only while working at a behavioral health agency licensed by the state of Arizona.

Continuing Education

6. In addition to the continuing education requirements of A.R.S. § 32-3273, within 12 months of the effective date of this Consent Agreement, Respondent shall take and pass a three semester credit hour graduate level behavioral health ethics course from a regionally accredited college or university, pre-approved by the Board Chair or designee. Upon completion, Respondent shall submit to the Board an official transcript establishing completion of the required course.

Clinical Supervision

7. While on probation, Respondent shall submit to clinical supervision for 24 months by a masters or higher level behavioral health professional licensed at the independent level. Within 30 days of the date of this Consent Agreement, Respondent shall submit the name of a clinical supervisor for pre-approval by the Board Chair or designee. Also within 30 days of the date of this Consent Agreement, the clinical supervisor shall submit a letter disclosing their prior relationship to Respondent. In that letter, the clinical supervisor must address why they should be approved, acknowledge that they have reviewed the Consent Agreement and include the results of an initial assessment and a supervision plan regarding the proposed supervision of Respondent. The letter from the supervisor shall be submitted to the Board.

Focus and Frequency of Clinical Supervision

8. The focus of the supervision shall relate to boundaries, ethics, and clinical documentation. Respondent shall meet individually in person with the supervisor once weekly for the first 12 months of probation. Following the initially 12 months of probation, the frequency may be at the recommendation of the supervisor, but not less than once monthly.

Reports 1

 Once approved, the supervisor shall submit quarterly reports for review and approval by the Board Chair or designee. The quarterly reports shall include issues presented in

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this Consent Agreement that need to be reported and the supervisor shall notify the Board if more frequent supervision is needed. Quarterly reports shall include the following:

- a. Dates of each clinical supervision session.
- b. A comprehensive description of issues discussed during supervision sessions.
- 10. All quarterly supervision reports shall include a copy of clinical supervision documentation maintained for that quarter. All clinical supervision documentation maintained by the supervisor shall comply with requirements set forth in A.A.C. R4-6-212(C).
- 11. After Respondent's probationary period, the supervisor shall submit a final summary report for review and approval by the Board Chair or designee. The final report shall also contain a recommendation as to whether the Respondent should be released from this Consent Agreement.

Change of Clinical Supervisor During Probation

12. If, during the period of Respondent's probation, the clinical supervisor determines that they cannot continue as the clinical supervisor, they shall notify the Board within 10 days of the end of supervision and provide the Board with an interim final report. Respondent shall advise the Board Chair or designee within 30 days of cessation of clinical supervision by the approved clinical supervisor and provide the name of a new proposed clinical supervisor. The proposed clinical supervisor shall provide the same documentation to the Board as was required of the initial clinical supervisor.

Therapy

13. During the period of probation, Respondent shall attend therapy for 24 months with a masters or higher level behavioral health professional licensed at the independent level. Within 30 days of the date of this Consent Agreement, Respondent shall submit the name of

their therapist and the therapist's curriculum vitae for pre-approval by the Board Chair or designee. Also within 30 days of the date of this Consent Agreement, the therapist shall submit a letter addressing why they should be approved, acknowledging that they have reviewed the Consent Agreement and include the results of an initial assessment and a treatment plan regarding the proposed treatment of Respondent.

14. Upon approval, the Board will provide the therapist with copies of any required evaluations completed at the request of the Board prior to this Consent Agreement and the Board's investigative report.

Focus and Frequency of Therapy

15. The focus of the therapy shall relate to concerns identified in the investigative report. Respondent shall meet in person with the therapist twice monthly for the first 12 months of probation. Following the initial 12 months of probation, the frequency may be at the recommendation of the therapist, but not less than once monthly.

Reports

16. Once approved, the therapist shall submit quarterly reports and a final summary report to the Board for review and approval. The quarterly reports shall include issues presented in this Consent Agreement that need to be reported and the therapist shall notify the Board if more frequent therapy is needed. The reports shall address Respondent's current mental health status, medications prescribed, if any, treatment recommendation, and shall report if, in their professional opinion, Respondent becomes unable to practice psychotherapy safely and competently. The final report shall also contain a recommendation as to whether the Respondent should be released from this Consent Agreement.

Change of Therapist

17. In the event that, during the period of Respondent's probation, Respondent's Board-approved therapist discontinues treatment, Respondent shall submit the name of a new

therapist and the therapist's curriculum vitae for pre-approval by the Board Chair or designee within 30 days of the discontinued treatment. Also within 30 days of the date of the discontinued treatment, the proposed therapist shall submit a letter addressing why they should be approved, acknowledging that they have reviewed the Consent Agreement, and include the results of an initial assessment and a treatment plan regarding the proposed treatment of Respondent.

Recovery Program

18. While on probation, Respondent shall attend recovery support meetings at a minimum of 3 times per week. Respondent shall obtain a sponsor, mentor, or group leader and that individual shall provide quarterly reports to the Board Chair or designee attesting to Respondent's attendance and participation.

Biological Fluid Testing

19. Within 10 days of the effective date of this Order, Respondent shall enroll in a program that meets Board criteria for observed random biological fluid testing. The chemicals tested shall be determined by the Board Chair or designee. Random testing shall be done twice monthly for the first 12 months of probation and once monthly following the initial 12 months of probation. Testing may be required more frequently as requested by the Board or its designee. Respondent shall direct the Board-approved testing laboratory to provide a copy of each test result to the Board. Respondent shall direct the Board-approved testing laboratory to advise the Board or its designee within 7 days regarding any issue of noncompliance by Respondent. Respondent shall notify the biological fluid testing laboratory and the Board, in writing, of unavailability to test prior to an anticipated absence or if unable to provide a sample due to illness. Respondent must submit in writing within 7 days of the missed specimen, documentation from a treating physician who has personally evaluated Respondent on the day of the requested screen that Respondent was not physically able to report to the laboratory for biological fluid testing.

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Failure to show for a random biological fluid test or failure to provide a random biological fluid sample on a day when a sample is requested by the Board, its designed or the laboratory will be considered an admission of a positive urine screening. The following situations will also constitute an admission of a positive urine screen: submission of a specimen where the integrity has been compromised as indicated by the presence of adulterants, with determination made by laboratory personnel; submission of a sample that is below acceptable volume or temperature to be tested; failure to provide written advance notice of anticipated absence; and failure to provide written verification of illness from a physician within 7 days of the missed specimen.

Failure to show for the random biological fluid test, failure to provide a random biological fluid sample or a positive drug screen showing evidence of any drug other than an authorized medication will constitute a violation of this Order. A violation of this Order for those reasons will be deemed to be a threat to the public's health, safety and welfare. The Board may then summarily suspend Respondent's license and may impose disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension or revocation of Respondent's license, after notice and opportunity for a hearing. The issue at such hearing will be limited to whether Respondent violated this Order by failing to show for a random biological fluid test, failing to provide a random biological fluid sample or for having tested positive for any drug other than an authorized medication.

20. Respondent shall abstain completely from the personal use of the following substances: opiates, foodstuffs containing poppy seeds, foodstuffs containing hemp products, and herbal or health preparations containing derivatives of controlled substances. Respondent is fully responsible for any and all ingested materials and their contents.

- 21. Respondent shall abstain completely from the personal use of alcohol or controlled substances or possession of controlled substances, as defined in the State Controlled Substances Act and Dangerous Drugs and Narcotics as defined by law or any drugs requiring a prescription. Respondent shall abstain from the use of alcohol and all over-the-counter medications except plain aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen.
- 22. Orders prohibiting Respondent from personal use or possession of controlled substances, dangerous drugs, narcotics, or medications do not apply to medications lawfully prescribed to Respondent for a bona fide illness or condition by a medical care provider. During the duration of this Consent Agreement, Respondent shall select one (1) medical care provider to coordinate their health care needs and to be aware of all prescriptions utilized by Respondent. Respondent shall immediately submit to that provider a copy of this Consent Agreement and shall execute all release of information forms as required by the Board or its designee. The medical care provider shall, within 14 days of the effective date of this Consent Agreement, inform the Board, in writing, of knowledge of Respondent's Consent Agreement and provide a list of medications prescribed for Respondent. During the duration of this Consent Agreement, Respondent shall cause all providers to notify the Board of any additional medications ordered by the provider. The notification shall be made in writing within 7 days of the provider's issuance of the prescription.
- 23. If Respondent has a lawful prescription for a narcotic or mood-altering drug, Respondent shall cause their prescribing provider to submit monthly reports to the Board by the 30th day of each month regarding the continued need for the prescribed narcotic or mood-altering medications. The Board or its designee may, at any time, request the provider to document the continued need for prescribed medications. Respondent shall keep a written record of medications taken, including over the counter drugs, and produce such record upon request by the Board or its designee.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Provision of Clinical Supervision

24. Respondent shall not provide clinical supervision to associate level licensees accruing and submitting hours towards independent licensure while subject to this Consent Agreement.

Civil Penalty

- 25. Subject to the provisions set forth in paragraph 26, the Board imposes a civil penalty against the Respondent in the amount of \$1,000.00.
- 26. Respondent's payment of the civil penalty shall be stayed so long as Respondent remains compliant with the terms of this Consent Agreement. If Board staff determines that Respondent is noncompliant with the terms of this Consent Agreement in any respect, with the exception of the tolling provision under paragraph 3, the stay of the civil penalty payment shall be automatically lifted and payment of the civil penalty shall be made by certified check or money order payable to the Board within 30 days after being notified in writing of the lifting of the stay.
- 27. Within 10 days of being notified of the lifting of the stay, Respondent may request that the matter be reviewed by the Board for the limited purpose of determining whether the automatic lifting of the stay was supported by clear and convincing evidence. If the Board receives the written request within 10 days or less of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the request will not be heard at that meeting, but will be heard at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board's decision on this matter shall not be subject to further review.
- 28. The Board reserves the right to take further disciplinary action against Respondent for noncompliance with this Consent Agreement after affording Respondent notice

and an opportunity to be heard. If a complaint is filed against Respondent for failure to comply with this Consent Agreement, the Board shall have continuing jurisdiction until the matter is final and the period of probation shall be extended until the matter is final.

- 29. If Respondent currently sees clients in their own private practice, and obtains any other type of behavioral health position, either as an employee or independent contractor, where they provide behavioral health services to clients of another individual or agency, they shall comply with requirements set forth in paragraphs 30 through 32 below.
- 30. Within 10 days of the effective date of this Order, if Respondent is working in a position where Respondent provides any type of behavioral health related services or works in a setting where any type of behavioral health, health care, or social services are provided, Respondent shall provide the Board Chair or designee with a signed statement from Respondent's employer(s) confirming Respondent provided the employer(s) with a copy of this Consent Agreement. If Respondent does not provide the employer's statement to the Board within 10 days of the effective date, the Board will provide Respondent's employer(s) with a copy of the Consent Agreement.
- 31. If Respondent is not employed as of the effective date of this Order, within 10 days of accepting employment in a position where Respondent provides any type of behavioral health related services or in a setting where any type of behavioral health, health care, or social services are provided, Respondent shall provide the Board Chair or designee with a written statement providing the contact information of their new employer and a signed statement from Respondent's new employer confirming Respondent provided the employer with a copy of this Consent Agreement. If Respondent does not provide the employer's statement to the Board within 10 days, as required, Respondent's failure to provide the required statement to the Board shall be deemed a violation of A.R.S. § 32-3251(16)(n) and the Board will provide Respondent's employer(s) with a copy of the Consent Agreement.

- 32. If, during the period of Respondent's probation, Respondent changes employment, resigns, is involuntarily terminated, resigns in lieu of termination, or goes on extended leave of absence for whatever reason that may impact their ability to timely comply with the terms of probation, Respondent shall, within 10 days of the aforementioned acts, inform the Board of their change of employment status. After the change and within 10 days of accepting employment in a position where Respondent provides any type of behavioral health related services or in a setting where any type of behavioral health, health care, or social services are provided, Respondent shall provide the Board Chair or designee a written statement providing the contact information of their new employer(s) and a signed statement from Respondent's new employer(s) confirming Respondent provided the employer(s) with a copy of this Consent Agreement. If Respondent does not provide the employer's statement to the Board within 10 days, as required, Respondent's failure to provide the required statement to the Board shall be deemed a violation of A.R.S. § 32-3251(16)(n) and the Board will provide Respondent's employer(s) with a copy of the Consent Agreement.
- 33. Respondent shall practice behavioral health using the name under which they are licensed. If Respondent changes their name, they shall advise the Board of the name change as prescribed under the Board's regulations and rules.
- 34. Prior to the release of Respondent from probation, Respondent must submit a written request to the Board for release from the terms of this Consent Agreement at least 30 days prior to the date they would like to have this matter appear before the Board. Respondent may appear before the Board, either in person or telephonically. Respondent must provide evidence that they have successfully satisfied all terms and conditions in this Consent Agreement. The Board has the sole discretion to determine whether all terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement have been met and whether Respondent has adequately demonstrated

that they have addressed the issues contained in this Consent Agreement. In the event that the		
Board determines that any or all terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement have not been		
met, the Boa	ard may conduct such further proceedir	ngs as it determines are appropriate to
address thos	e matters.	
35.	Respondent shall bear all costs relat	ing to probation terms required in this
Consent Agre	eement.	
36.	Respondent shall be responsible for en	suring that all documentation required in
this Consent	Agreement is provided to the Board in a ti	mely manner.
37.	37. This Consent Agreement shall be effective on the date of entry below.	
38.	This Consent Agreement is conclusive evidence of the matters described herein	
and may be considered by the Board in determining appropriate sanctions in the event a		
subsequent v	violation occurs.	
PROF	FESSIONAL ACCEPTS, SIGNS AND DAT	TES THIS CONSENT AGREEMENT
Erik M. Ish Erik M. Ish (Oct 2, 2023 11:: Erik M. Ish	55 PDT)	Oct 2, 2023
Erik ivi. ish		Date
В	OARD ACCEPTS, SIGNS AND DATES T	HIS CONSENT AGREEMENT
By: Me	· Zarola_	Dec 6, 2023
ТОВІ	ZAVALA, Executive Director na Board of Behavioral Health Examiners	Date
ORIGINAL o	f the foregoing filed Dec 6, 2023	
	d of Behavioral Health Examiners dams Street, Suite 3600 85007	
EXECUTED to:	COPY of the foregoing sent electronically	Dec 6, 2023

Mona Baskin Assistant Attorney General 2005 North Central Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85004 Erik M. Ish Address of Record Respondent