

1 **BEFORE THE ARIZONA BOARD**  
2 **OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH EXAMINERS**

3 **In the Matter of:**

4 **Karen L. Mueller, LCSW-17417,**  
5 **Licensed Clinical Social Worker,**  
6 **In the State of Arizona.**

7 **RESPONDENT**

**CASE NO. 2023-0043**  
**CONSENT AGREEMENT**  
**FOR VOLUNTARY SURRENDER**

8 In the interest of a prompt and speedy settlement of the above captioned matter,  
9 consistent with the public interest, statutory requirements and responsibilities of the Arizona  
10 State Board of Behavioral Health Examiners (“Board”), and pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 32-3281(F)  
11 and 41-1092.07(F)(5), Karen L. Mueller (“Respondent”) and the Board enter into this Consent  
12 Agreement, Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order (“Consent Agreement”) as a final  
13 disposition of this matter.

14 **RECITALS**

15 Respondent understands and agrees that:

16 1. Any record prepared in this matter, all investigative materials prepared or  
17 received by the Board concerning the allegations, and all related materials and exhibits may be  
18 retained in the Board’s file pertaining to this matter.

19 2. Respondent has the right to a formal administrative hearing at which Respondent  
20 can present evidence and cross examine the State’s witnesses. Respondent hereby irrevocably  
21 waives their right to such formal hearing concerning these allegations and irrevocably waives  
22 their right to any rehearing or judicial review relating to the allegations contained in this Consent  
23 Agreement.

24 3. Respondent has the right to consult with an attorney prior to entering into this  
25 Consent Agreement.

1           4.     Respondent acknowledges and agrees that upon signing this Consent  
2 Agreement and returning it to the Board's Executive Director, Respondent may not revoke their  
3 acceptance of this Consent Agreement or make any modifications to it. Any modification of this  
4 original document is ineffective and void unless mutually approved by the parties in writing.

5           5.     The findings contained in the Findings of Fact portion of this Consent Agreement  
6 are conclusive evidence of the facts stated herein between only Respondent and the Board for  
7 the final disposition of this matter and may be used for purposes of determining sanctions in any  
8 future disciplinary matter.

9           6.     This Consent Agreement is subject to the Board's approval, and will be effective  
10 only when the Board accepts it. In the event the Board in its discretion does not approve this  
11 Consent Agreement, this Consent Agreement is withdrawn and shall be of no evidentiary value,  
12 nor shall it be relied upon or introduced in any disciplinary action by any party hereto, except  
13 that Respondent agrees that should the Board reject this Consent Agreement and this case  
14 proceeds to hearing, Respondent shall assert no claim that the Board was prejudiced by its  
15 review and discussion of this document or of any records relating thereto.

16          7.     Respondent acknowledges and agrees that the acceptance of this Consent  
17 Agreement is solely to settle this Board matter and does not preclude the Board from instituting  
18 other proceedings as may be appropriate now or in the future. Furthermore, and  
19 notwithstanding any language in this Consent Agreement, this Consent Agreement does not  
20 preclude in any way any other state agency or officer or political subdivision of this state from  
21 instituting proceedings, investigating claims, or taking legal action as may be appropriate now or  
22 in the future relating to this matter or other matters concerning Respondent, including but not  
23 limited to violations of Arizona's Consumer Fraud Act. Respondent acknowledges that, other  
24 than with respect to the Board, this Consent Agreement makes no representations, implied or

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

3 8. Respondent understands that once the Board approves and signs this Consent  
4 Agreement, it is a public record that may be publicly disseminated as a formal action of the  
5 Board, and that it shall be reported as required by law to the National Practitioner Data Bank.

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

7 **FINDINGS OF FACT**

8 1. Respondent is the holder of License No. LCSW-17417 for the practice of social  
9 work in the State of Arizona.

10 2. On 09/28/22, the Board received a complaint from a therapist ("Therapist")  
11 alleging unprofessional conduct.

12 3. Therapist recently began working with a family consisting of mother ("Mother"),  
13 father ("Father"), and 17-year-old daughter ("Daughter") for family therapy to process the impact  
14 of Father's past substance abuse which had reportedly ceased prior to the start of services.

15 4. On 09/09/22, during a family session, Daughter disclosed experiencing bad  
16 thoughts of suicidal ideation.

17 5. When Therapist inquired as to whether Daughter and Respondent have created  
18 a safety plan for this, she responded with, "What's a safety plan?"

19 6. Therapist explained and Daughter reported discussing what to do but not having  
20 anything written down.

21 7. On 09/16/22, Therapist and Mother spoke in which she reported feeling very  
22 distressed after meeting with Respondent.

23 8. She explained that they met to discuss Daughter's increasing suicidal ideation  
24 which had reportedly progressed to Daughter having a plan and method, and Mother explained

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1 that Respondent had stated that Mother needs to change the environment for Daughter by  
2 leaving her husband or to ask him to leave the family home.

3 9. Mother stated the recent beneficial shift in the family dynamic which Daughter  
4 reported hopefulness regarding this shift, and that she and Father have started couples' therapy  
5 for her reported conflicted feelings surrounding this suggestion.

6 10. Therapist obtained ROI's for Respondent after this conversation and called  
7 Respondent to collaborate care after Therapist staffed with her supervisor.

8 11. Respondent spoke to the nature of the parents' marital relationship in this call in  
9 which she stated that Mother "is an enabler" to Father's drinking and that Father had secretly  
10 been drinking while she was out of town for work.

11 12. Respondent also disclosed how the family's oldest daughter is being impacted by  
12 the family situation and described specific emotional processes surrounding protection and a  
13 "parentified" role within the family and her relationship to her sister and parents.

14 13. Therapist requested that the safety plan be sent to her, and Respondent shared  
15 that it was a verbal agreement and that it was not a formal plan so she did not have it written  
16 down.

17 14. Therapist inquired as to what interventions and approaches were being utilized to  
18 stabilize Daughter within individual therapy, and Respondent stated that family needs to change  
19 the environment at home because of how Daughter was being impacted by mixed messages  
20 and the parent's relationship.

21 15. Daughter disclosed to Therapist that she and Respondent meet at Kneader's by  
22 Daughter's house, and that Daughter feels uncomfortable meeting in a public place for sessions  
23 because she feels she does not have the privacy to open up about what she is going through.

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