

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF
SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS (LABSWE)**

IN THE MATTER OF

LABSWE COMPLAINT

SANDRA "CANDY" CHRISTOPHE

NUMBER 2006-39

LICENSE No. 4466

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER

WHEREAS, Sandra Christophe is a credentialed social worker subject to the jurisdiction and rules and regulations of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners (the Board); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to a complaint and administrative investigation, the social worker, Sandra Christophe, has indicated her desire to resolve this matter through a Consent Agreement and Order as provided for in Rule No. 907 of the Board's Rules, Standards and Procedures and LA R.S. 49:955(D) of the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act; and

WHEREAS, the social worker, Sandra Christophe, has admitted the following:

1. Ms. Christophe is and at all times pertinent to the facts and matters alleged herein, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) credentialed by the Board to engage in the practice of social work in the State of Louisiana pursuant to the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act, LA R.S. 37:2701 et seq., as evidenced by License No. 4466.
2. That Ms. Christophe was employed full-time as a supervisor at Office of Mental Health, Huey P. Long Psychiatric Unit during the time in question.

3. At all times pertinent hereto, Ms. Christophe was actively engaged in the practice of social work as a private practice treatment provider to sexual offenders.
4. That during the time period from September 1999 through the date of this Consent Agreement and Order, Ms. Christophe worked part-time as a social worker at Christophe Counseling and provided individual and group therapy treatment to sexual offenders.
5. That "Registered Clinical Sexual Offender Treatment Providers are Louisiana Mental Health Professionals (who) report to have a level of experience in the area of assessment and treatment of sexual offenders and report to follow the ethical standards, guidelines and principles established by the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)." "By placing themselves on the Registry, they assert themselves as professionals who support and follow the ideals of ATSA and also the other standards of the Registry as established by the Interagency Council."
6. That Ms. Christophe admits to this Board that she placed her name on the Registry of Sexual Offender Treatment Providers on, or about December 31, 2002, stating on the Registry that she provided 500 hours of direct treatment of sexual offenders; whereas the Registry requires 1,500 hours of direct treatment of sexual offenders.
7. That Ms. Christophe did not receive structured supervision for her treatment of sexual offenders in lieu of not having met the criteria for

treating sexual offenders under the auspice of the Registry of Sexual Offender Treatment Providers..

8. That Ms. Christophe reported receiving 40 hours of continuing education in sexual offender treatment training at the time of placing her name on the Registry, whereas 20.5 hours of continuing education on the specific topic of the treatment of sexual offenders were identified. Act 848 (originally S.B. 440) required a minimum of 40 hours.
9. That Ms. Christophe conducted group therapy with up to twenty-one (21) group attendees signed in, whereas Act 848 recommends a maximum of 12 clients per group.
10. That Ms. Christophe conducted therapy sessions once a month for four (4) hours each, whereas Act 848 states "sexual offender treatment (counseling) is comprehensive and usually requires a series of counseling sessions over an extended period of time, generally weekly and over several years."
11. That Ms. Christophe failed to provide Polygraphs, Viewing Time Responses and/or Phallometric Testing to her sexual offender clients, whereas ATSA guidelines state, "Members shall attempt to use the following sources of information when conducting their evaluations: Client Interviews; Interviews with collateral informants as applicable (family member, romantic partners/spouse, teachers, employer, previous service providers, probation/parole officer; Relevant psychometric testing (see Appendix F); Psycho-physiological assessments such as phallometry,

polygraph or viewing time measures (see Appendices); A thorough review of official documents, including criminal records, witness statements, previous assessment and treatment reports, medical records, and victim impact statement." "Members should use phallometric testing to corroborate the self-report of male clients regarding their sexual arousal patterns and either phallometric testing or viewing time measures to corroborate the report of sexual interests in children. Polygraphs should be used to corroborate client self-report regarding their sexual offenses, sexual histories, and compliance with treatment and supervision requirements."

12. That Ms. Christophe determined which therapy group a client would attend based upon the date the client began treatment instead of the client's diagnosis and/or clinical needs.

13. When the client(s) refused to authorize Ms. Christophe to consult with their former clinician, Ms. Christophe neither terminated with the client nor notified the client's parole officer of non-compliance. ATSA guidelines state, "At the time of the initial appointment, members shall ask clients to provide information about their involvement with other clinicians and a release of information should be obtained in order to consult with that clinician. If the client refuses to comply, consideration should be given to terminating the professional relationship and/or reporting this fact to the appropriate authorities." "If a member discovers that a client previously received mental health services from another service provider, a signed

release of information should be obtained immediately and in consultation with the other service provider should be attempted in a timely fashion."

14. Despite knowing that the majority of sexual offenders were enrolled in a treatment program, Ms. Christophe contacted other therapists' clients via a letter/flyer sent to sexual offenders' homes and did not contact the clients' therapists prior to contacting the clients. ATSA guidelines state, Members shall not knowingly offer services to a client who is currently involved in treatment with another professional without attempting to consult with that professional and determine whether this arrangement is in the best interest of the client and the community.

15. That Ms. Christophe hired and supervised two Registered Social Workers (Bachelor's level) to provide individual counseling/therapy to patients/families, counseling services through direct client contact with specialized complex cases of sex offenders and treatment of complicated cases (sexual offenders) in Ms. Christophe's private practice.

WHEREAS, by placing her name on the Registry for Sexual Offender Treatment Providers without the required number of direct treatment hours that the Registry required, having fewer hours of continuing education in sexual offender treatment training than the Registry required, and identifying herself as a Registered Sexual Offender Treatment Provider, Ms. Christophe has violated her professional and ethical duty that a social worker should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, credential, consultation received, supervised experience, or other

relevant professional experience as set out in Rule 109(A)(1) of the Rules, Standards and Procedures for Louisiana social workers, which action does constitute unethical conduct and pursuant to Rule 105 is a violation of LA R.S. 37:2717(A)(11) of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act.

WHEREAS, by placing her name on the Registry and treating sexual offenders without the required number of treatment/assessment hours and continuing education in sexual offender treatment training, and failing to receive supervision from individuals who are competent in those interventions or techniques, Ms. Christophe has violated her professional and ethical duty that a social worker should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from persons who are competent in those interventions or techniques as set out in Rule 109(A)(2) of the Rules, Standards and Procedures for Louisiana social workers, which action does constitute unethical conduct and pursuant to Rule 105 is a violation of LA R.S. 37:2717(A)(11) of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act.

WHEREAS, by failing to utilize identified psycho-physiological assessments, conducting therapy groups with more clients than recommended, conducting therapy monthly instead of weekly, determining group composition on the basis of geographic location and/or date of entry into treatment, and failing to consult with clients' prior therapists, Ms. Christophe has violated her professional and ethical duty that a social worker shall not practice in a manner detrimental or potentially detrimental to the client by act or omission, which act or omission is

either the result of deliberate or intentional conduct or negligent conduct, which is a violation of LA R.S. 37:2717(A)(7) of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act.

WHEREAS, by sending out letters/flyers to the homes of sexual offenders and knowing that sex offenders are required to be enrolled in treatment, Ms. Christophe has violated her professional and ethical duty that a social worker's duty requires the promotion and advancement of the best interests and welfare of clients, students and supervisees with whom the social worker has a professional social work relationship. It is a breach of this duty for a social worker to use the professional relationship to promote or advance the social worker's emotional, financial, sexual or personal needs as set out in Rule 113(A) of the Rules, Standards and Procedures for Louisiana social workers, which failure does constitute unethical conduct and pursuant to Rule 105 is a violation of LA R.S.37:2717 (A)(5) of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act.

WHEREAS, by assigning and supervising Bachelor's level social workers (RSWs) to provide therapy to sexual offenders, Ms. Christophe has violated her professional and ethical duty that a social worker shall not assign, oversee or supervise the performance of a task by another individual when the social worker knows that the other individual is not credentialed to perform the task or has not developed the competence to perform such a task, as set out in Rule 109(E) of the Rules, Standards and Procedures for Louisiana social workers, which failure does constitute unethical conduct and pursuant to Rule 105 is a violation of LA R.S.37:2717 (A)(5) of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act.

WHEREAS, the credentialed social worker has indicated her desire to resolve this matter through this Consent Agreement and Order; and

WHEREAS, the undersigned Assistant Attorney General has conducted an interview with the respondent who has indicated her desire to resolve this matter through this Consent Agreement and Order;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that in consideration of the foregoing and pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by LA R.S. 49:955(D), the Board orders and Sandra "Candy" Christophe accepts the following administrative action which is a final decision pursuant to the LA R.S. 49:958:

1. That Ms. Christophe shall be on probation until she meets the requirements identified in this Consent Agreement and Order.
2. That Ms. Christophe shall not directly or indirectly provide, supervise, oversee or manage, clinical services to sexual offenders for one (1) calendar year, with the year beginning thirty (30) days after all parties sign the Consent Agreement and Order (April 17, 2006).
3. That Ms. Christophe shall not present any educational activities (for instance, in-services, workshops, seminars) on the topic of the treatment of sexual offenders during the above referenced calendar year. Ms. Christophe may assist in the preparation of this educational material but her name shall not appear on the written material related to the educational functions.
4. That Ms. Christophe shall send written correspondence to the Registry of Sexual Offender Treatment Providers, with a copy to the Board, with

instructions to remove her name from the Registry within ten (10) days all parties sign the Consent Agreement and Order. Ms. Christophe shall provide the Board with proof that her name has been removed within thirty (30) days all parties sign the Consent Agreement and Order.

5. After one (1) year, Ms. Christophe may treat sexual offenders under the supervision of a Board approved supervisor until an additional one thousand (1000) clock hours of direct face-to-face treatment (Individual, family and/or group) and/or assessment of sexual offenders are accrued. The supervision shall occur a minimum of once a month. The respondent shall be financially responsible for all supervisory expenses. The supervisor shall notify the Board upon the respondent's successful completion of the above one thousand (1000) clock hours of treatment/assessment, with a copy provided to Ms. Christophe.
6. The above Board approved supervisor shall submit quarterly progress reports to the Board by the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter, with the reports addressing the respondent's assessment/ treatment interventions and compliance with The Louisiana Social Work Practice Act; The Rules, Standards and Procedures of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act; and this Consent Agreement and Order.
7. Ms. Christophe shall comply with the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act and the Rules, Standards, & Procedures for the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act.

8. If the respondent chooses not to treat sex offenders after the one year of licensure restriction, she must provide the Board with a sworn affidavit declaring her decision. In that event, the probation will cease once all other terms of this Agreement have been met. The supervision requirements will cease if the respondent provides the above affidavit. The treatment of sexual offenders by the respondent after an affidavit is provided will be viewed as non-compliance with the terms of this Agreement and subject to further disciplinary actions by the Board.
9. Ms. Christophe shall successfully complete the Board's Open-Book examination on Ethics, the Practice Act and Rules, Regulations and Procedures within ninety (90) days all parties sign the Consent Agreement and Order. The respondent shall be responsible for all fees associated with the examination.
10. That Ms. Christophe shall complete a total of ten (10) clock hours of continuing education on the subjects of sexual offender treatment interventions and ethics within one (1) year from the date that all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. This continuing education is to be pre-approved by the Board and shall be in addition to the annual twenty (20) hours of continuing education required to maintain her LCSW. Ms. Christophe shall provide the Board with evidence of attendance within thirty (30) days of completion of the continuing education.
11. Ms. Christophe shall pay the costs of investigation and fines in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00). Said five thousand dollars

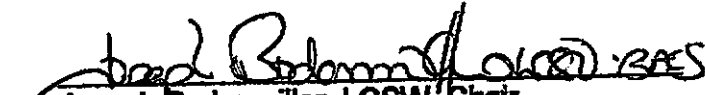
(\$5,000.00) shall be paid to the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners by making eleven (11) monthly payments of four hundred sixteen and 67/100 dollars (\$416.67) and one final payment of four hundred sixteen and 63/100 dollars (\$416.63). The first payment shall be due on the 15th day of the month following the day when all parties sign this Agreement (April 15, 2006), and additional payments being due on the 15th day of each month thereafter until all payments are made. No interest shall be accrued during the above year. There shall be no pre-payment penalties.

12. Ms. Christophe specifically acknowledges that failure to comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order may result in a suspension or revocation of her LCSW. The admissions contained herein, will be considered proven and the only issue will be failure to follow the terms of Consent Agreement and Order.

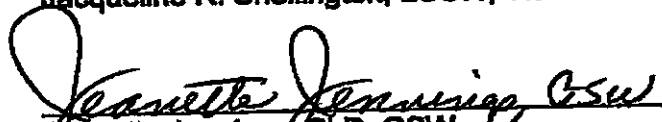
13. By agreeing to the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order, Ms. Christophe waives all rights to appeal this adjudication.

THIS CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER is a matter of public record for violation of the above referenced sections of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act and the Rules, Standards and Procedures. The terms of this Consent Agreement and Order may be published and reported, including but not limited to, the LABSWE Newsletter.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the Louisiana State Board of Social Work
Examiners has entered into this Consent Agreement and Order and executed
same at Baton Rouge, Louisiana on this the 17th day of March 2006.


Joseph Bodenmiller, LCSW, Chair

Jacqueline R. Shellington, LCSW, Vice Chair



Jeanette Jennings, PhD. GSW,
Secretary/Treasurer


Tria Feldt, LCSW, Board Member

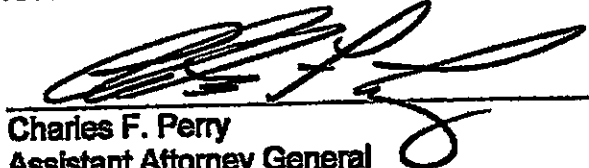

Robert Showers, RSW, Board Member


Lola C. Coleman, LCSW, Board Member

I, Sandra "Candy" Christophe, LCSW, do hereby acknowledge, accept and agree to entry of the above Consent Agreement and Order. My signature acknowledges my understanding that this Consent Agreement and Order is a final decision of the Board and is a public record which evidences the resolution of Complaint No. 2006-39. I hereby waive any and all legal, procedural, or judicial remedies, appeals, or relief which might be available under the Administrative Procedures Act, and the statutory and procedural rules of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners.


Sandra "Candy" Christophe March 8, 2006
Date

I, Charles F. Perry, Assistant Attorney General, do hereby acknowledge negotiation and preparation of this Consent Agreement and Order in order to resolve, with prejudice, all matters for which the social worker, Sandra "Candy" Christophe, could be charged under Complaint No. 2006-39; and further certify that this Consent Agreement and Order is consistent with the evidence, adequately addresses the complaint and represents a true and correct statement of that which could be proven at a hearing of this matter.


Charles F. Perry March 8, 2006
Assistant Attorney General Date