

Discipline Summary

Amanda Stark (Kemptville, ON)

January 25 and June 12, 2024

Decision

On February 27, 2024, the Discipline Committee found that Ms. Stark committed acts of professional misconduct in that she:

1. sexually abused a client;
2. engaged in conduct or performed an act relevant to the practice of the profession that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by registrants as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional; and
3. engaged in conduct that would reasonably be regarded by registrants as conduct unbecoming of a Massage Therapist.

Ms. Stark engaged in a sexual relationship with two clients. The relationship with the first client occurred within a year of the client's last Massage Therapy treatment with Ms. Stark, and the law considers clients to be "patients" for one year after they stop receiving care from the health professional. Ms. Stark's personal relationship with the second client was concurrent with the treating relationship. Ms. Stark also admitted to frequently speaking about her sex life with the second client and his spouse.

Penalty and Costs Award

On June 12, 2024, the Discipline Committee held a penalty and costs hearing and ordered the following:

1. Ms. Stark is required to appear before a panel of the Discipline Committee immediately following the hearing of this matter to be reprimanded, with the fact of the reprimand and the text of the reprimand to appear on the public register of the College;
2. The Registrar is directed to immediately revoke Ms. Stark's Certificate of Registration;

3. Ms. Stark is required to reimburse the College for funding provided to the clients [for therapy and counselling] under the program required under section 85.7 of the Code;
4. Ms. Stark is required to post security in the amount of \$7,000 to guarantee payments of any amount she is required to pay under paragraph 3 above, which can be paid in 23 monthly installments of \$291 and a final payment of \$307, with the first payment beginning one month from the date of the order; and
5. Ms. Stark is required to pay the College costs in the amount of \$5,852, which can be paid in 23 monthly installments of \$243 and a final payment of \$263, with the first payment beginning one month from the date of the order.

The complete Decision and Reasons will be available online on the [Canadian Legal Information Institute \(CanLII\) website](#).

Reprimand Delivered to Ms. Stark

The following reprimand was delivered by a panel of the Discipline Committee:

Ms. Stark, the panel recognizes and appreciates your cooperation with the College in coming to an Agreed Statement of Facts and a Joint Submission on Penalty and Costs, which assisted in the process and lessened the burden of time and resources on the College by avoiding the need for a contested hearing.

That being said, we wish to note that your actions undermined the public's confidence in the profession. Engaging in a concurrent professional and sexual relationship with clients was unacceptable and demonstrated a complete lack of professional judgment. The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario has a zero-tolerance policy for the sexual abuse of clients, and this is reflected in the mandatory nature of the revocation and reprimand ordered in this case.

Being a Registered Massage Therapist is a privilege and not a right. It is the hope of the panel that our decision in this matter sends a clear and unequivocal message that at no time is it ever acceptable for a Massage Therapist to engage in a concurrent professional and sexual relationship with clients.