

1 **BEFORE THE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGIST EXAMINERS**
2 **FOR THE STATE OF ARIZONA**

3 **IN THE MATTER OF:**

Case No. 24-17

4 **BRET RINGDAHL, Ph.D.**

5 **Holder of License No. PSY-005542**
6 **for the Practice of Psychology**
7 **in the State of Arizona,**

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER
FOR SUSPENSION OF LICENSE AND
PROBATION WITH MONITORING

8 In the interest of a prompt and judicious settlement of this case, consistent with the public
9 interest, statutory requirements and the responsibilities of the Arizona State Board of
10 Psychologist Examiners (“Board”) under A.R.S. § 32-2061, *et seq.*, Bret Ringdahl
11 (“Respondent”), holder of license no. PSY-005542 as a Psychologist in the State of Arizona, and
12 the Board enter into the following Recitals, Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order
13 (“Consent Agreement”) as a final disposition of this matter.

14 **JURISDICTION**

15 1. The Board is the state agency authorized pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute (“A.R.S.”)
16 § 32-2061 *et seq.*, and the rules promulgated thereunder in the Arizona Administrative Code
17 (“A.A.C.” or “rules”) at R4-26-101 *et seq.*, to regulate and control the licensing of psychologists
18 in the State of Arizona.

19 2. Respondent is the holder of license number PSY-005542 for the practice of psychology
20 in the State of Arizona.

21 3. The Board has personal and subject-matter jurisdiction over Respondent pursuant to
22 A.R.S. § 32-2061 *et seq.*, and the rules at A.A.C. R4-26-101, *et seq.*

24 **RECITALS**

25 4. Respondent has read and understands this Consent Agreement and has had the
26 opportunity to discuss this Consent Agreement with an attorney, or has waived the opportunity to

1 discuss this Consent Agreement with an attorney.

2 5. Respondent understands that he has a right to a public administrative hearing concerning
3 this matter at which hearing he could present evidence and cross examine witnesses. By entering
4 into this Consent Agreement, Respondent knowingly and voluntarily relinquishes all right to
5 such an administrative hearing, as well as rights of rehearing, review, reconsideration, appeal,
6 judicial review or any other administrative and/or judicial action, concerning the matters set forth
7 herein.

8 6. Respondent affirmatively agrees that this Consent Agreement shall be irrevocable.

9 7. Respondent understands that this Consent Agreement or any part of the agreement may
10 be considered in any future disciplinary action by the Board against him.

11 8. Respondent understands this Consent Agreement deals with allegations of unprofessional
12 conduct against Respondent. The investigation into these allegations against Respondent shall be
13 concluded upon the Board's adoption of this Consent Agreement.

14 9. Respondent acknowledges and agrees that the acceptance of this Consent Agreement is
15 solely to settle this Board matter and does not preclude the Board from instituting other
16 proceedings as may be appropriate now or in the future.

17 10. Respondent understands that this Consent Agreement does not constitute a dismissal or
18 resolution of any other matters currently pending before the Board, if any, and does not
19 constitute any waiver, express or implied, of the Board's statutory authority or jurisdiction
20 regarding any other pending or future investigation, action or proceeding.

21 11. Furthermore, and notwithstanding any language in this Consent Agreement, this Consent
22 Agreement does not preclude in any way any other state agency or officer or political
23 subdivision of this state from instituting proceedings, investigating claims, or taking legal action
24 as may be appropriate now or in the future relating to this matter other matters concerning
25 Respondent, including violations of the Arizona's Consumer Fraud Act. Respondent
26 acknowledges that, other than with respect to the Board, this Consent Agreement makes no

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

4 12. Respondent acknowledges and agrees that, upon signing this Consent Agreement and
5 returning this document to the Board's Executive Director, he may not revoke acceptance of the
6 Consent Agreement or make any modifications to the document regardless of whether the
7 Consent Agreement has been signed by the Executive Director. Any modification to this original
8 document is ineffective and void unless mutually agreed by the parties in writing.

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

16 14. If a court of competent jurisdiction rules that any part of this Consent Agreement is void
17 or otherwise unenforceable, the remainder of the Consent Agreement shall remain in full force
18 and effect.

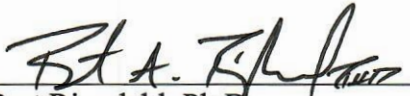
19 15. Respondent understands that this Consent Agreement is a public record that may be
20 publicly disseminated as a formal action of the Board and may be reported as required by law to
21 the National Practitioner Data Bank.

22 16. The parties understand and agree that Portable Document Format (PDF) and facsimile
23 copies of this Consent Agreement including PDF and facsimile signatures thereto, shall have the
24 same force and effect as the originals.

25 17. Respondent understands that any violation of this Consent Agreement constitutes
26 unprofessional conduct and may result in disciplinary action. A.R.S. §§ 32-2061(16)(aa).

1 18. Respondent agrees that the Board will adopt the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions
2 of Law and Order.

3
4 ACCEPTED AND AGREED BY RESPONDENT

5 
6 Bret Ringdahl, Ph.D.
7 Psychologist/Respondent

04/01/24
Date

8 **FINDINGS OF FACT**

9 1. The Board is the duly constituted authority for licensing and regulating the
10 practice of psychology in the State of Arizona.

11 2. On November 7, 2023, the Board received a complaint against Respondent from
12 his employer. The information received could demonstrate that Respondent may have a health
13 condition that, if true, may place patients and the public at risk for harm. The specifics of the
14 allegations are contained in the Board's files as the allegations contain protected health
15 information.

16 3. On December 8, 2023, Respondent and the Board entered into an Interim Consent
17 Agreement and Order for Evaluation and Practice Restriction ("ICA"). Pursuant to the ICA,
18 Respondent's license to practice psychology was suspended until further order of the Board.

19 4. In addition, the ICA required Respondent to complete a comprehensive
20 psychological evaluation with a Board-approved provider that included a substance use
21 component. The evaluator was also to opine on Respondent's fitness for duty. Respondent timely
22 complied with the terms of the ICA.

23 5. The evaluation occurred on January 18, 2024, and the evaluator, Dr. Nicole
24 Lazorwitz, submitted her final report to the Board on February 2, 2024.

25 6. On March 11, 2024, Respondent appeared before the Board for its review of the
26 results of the substance use evaluation and fitness for duty determination. The Board discussed

1 the report findings and recommendations, and posed questions to Respondent.

2 7. At the conclusion of its consideration of the matter, the Board voted to offer
3 Respondent this Consent Agreement as a final resolution of this matter.

4 **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

5 1. The Board possesses jurisdiction over the subject matter and over Respondent
6 pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-2091 *et seq.*

7 2. The Board is authorized to rehabilitate or discipline licensees who engage in
8 unprofessional conduct (A.R.S. §32-2061 *et seq.*) and to require a licensee to undergo any
9 combination of mental, physical or psychological competence examinations at the licensee’s
10 expense and shall conduct investigations necessary to determine the competence and conduct of
11 the licensee pursuant to A.R.S. §32-2081(G).

12 3. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-2081(S), the Board has the authority to “[e]nter into an
13 agreement with the psychologist to limit or restrict the psychologist’s practice or to rehabilitate
14 the psychologist in order to protect the public and ensure the psychologist’s ability to safely
15 engage in the practice of psychology.”

16 **ORDER**

17 Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Board under issues the
18 following Order. The effective date of this Order is the date it is signed by the Board’s
19 Executive Director on behalf of the Board.

20 **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:**

21 1. The suspension of Respondent’s license began on December 8, 2023, and shall
22 continue up to and including December 8, 2024. During the period of suspension, Respondent
23 shall not practice psychology or hold himself out as a practicing psychologist or in any way
24 convey to the public that he holds an active license to practice psychology.

25 2. After a suspension period of six (6) months (June 9, 2024), Respondent may seek
26 early lifting of the suspension by petitioning the Board in writing. Respondent must appear in

1 person (or virtually) before the Board at the meeting at which his request will be considered.
2 **Only when the suspension is lifted, does the probationary period begin as outlined below.**
3 **The decision to lift the suspension is within the sole discretion of the Board and shall only**
4 **be lifted if, in the opinion of the Board, Respondent is safe to return to the practice of**
5 **psychology. Respondent further understands that based upon the evaluation and**
6 **recommendation of the evaluator, he may be allowed to return to the practice of**
7 **psychology under conditions and restrictions as set forth by the Board, in addition to those**
8 **conditions set forth below.**

9 3. After the suspension is lifted, Respondent's license shall be placed on
10 **PROBATION** for a minimum period of twenty-four (24) months from the final date of
11 suspension.

12 4. The period of **SUSPENSION AND PROBATION** are subject to the following
13 terms and conditions:

14 5. Within ten days (10) days of the effective date of this Consent Agreement,
15 Respondent shall enter into a rehabilitation and monitoring contract with a **PRE-APPROVED**
16 substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation program ("Program").

17 6. Respondent shall ensure that within ten (10) business days of entering into a
18 contract with a pre-approved Program, the selected Program confirms in writing to the Board
19 that they have received a copy of this Order and are willing and able to comply with all the
20 requirements of this Order. During the term of the contract, Respondent shall continuously
21 abstain from alcohol, all illicit drugs, cannabis, all drugs of abuse, and any prescription
22 medication for which he does not have a valid prescription.

23 7. Respondent's written rehabilitation and monitoring contract with the Program
24 shall extend for the entire term of his suspension and probation under this Consent Agreement.
25 Respondent shall abide by each and every requirement of the contract, including complying with
26 random drug screens as directed by the monitor and attending four 12-step meetings per week.

1 Failure to participate in the rehabilitation and monitoring Program, complete the Program, or to
2 abide by any of the contract's terms is a violation of this Order.

3 8. Respondent shall comply timely with the Program's directions for additional
4 testing or testing methods (e.g. blood, hair, nails). Failure to comply with requests by the
5 Program shall be considered a violation of this Order.

6 9. Respondent shall advise the Board immediately (within 24 hours) of any missed
7 (excused or not) drug screen, 12-step meeting, or relapse prevention meeting. Respondent shall
8 also require the provider to notify the Board in writing within five (5) days of any missed
9 (excused or not) drug screen, 12-step meeting, or relapse prevention meeting, and if excused, the
10 reasons for excusing the absence.

11 10. **All random drug screen results shall be sent directly to the Board staff and to**
12 **Respondent. All positive results and/or missed tests shall be reported to the Board staff and**
13 **Respondent immediately (within 24 hours of the missed test or receipt of the positive drug**
14 **screen results).** The Board shall consider any diluted sample that Respondent submits, or any
15 specimen that has been tampered with, a violation of this Order and thus, Respondent shall be
16 subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension or revocation of his
17 license.

18 11. Respondent shall ensure the Program issues monthly reports to the Board
19 discussing Respondent's progress in the program, level of participation, compliance and any
20 areas of concern. The relationship between Respondent and the Program is a direct relationship.
21 Respondent shall not use an attorney or other intermediary to communicate with the Program
22 concerning participation and compliance issues. Any such questions should be directed to Board
23 staff.

24 12. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that Respondent shall continue with individual
25 therapy with a provider skilled in the areas noted by the evaluator and to address the issues
26 discussed by the evaluator. Respondent shall have weekly sessions with this provider for the

1 first six months and then twice monthly for the next six months.

2 13. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that upon the lifting of the suspension, should
3 Respondent return to the practice of psychology, he shall work under supervision for a minimum
4 period of 6 to 12 months. Under supervision means that Respondent shall work in a group setting
5 and not in private practice.

6 14. Prior to the termination of the supervision requirement and probation, Respondent
7 shall undergo an additional re-evaluation to determine his fitness for duty without supervision.

8 15. Respondent shall execute all appropriate releases of information forms to permit
9 the Respondent's treatment professionals to communicate with the Board regarding
10 Respondent's treatment and monitoring.

11 16. Respondent shall pay all necessary fees and expenses relating to this suspension
12 and probation, including all costs associated with the treatment and monitoring contract and the
13 re-evaluation.

14 17. Respondent shall obey all federal and state laws and rules governing the practice
15 of psychology.

16 18. Throughout the term of Respondent's suspension and probation, Respondent shall
17 personally appear before the Board when requested to do so by the Board or Board staff.

18 19. The probationary term imposed by this Order shall not terminate unless and until
19 Respondent submits a written request to the Board seeking termination of his probation, and
20 provide written proof of completion of the requirements of this Agreement and Order.
21 Respondent shall appear before the Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting approximately
22 two years after the effective date of this Order to request that the probation imposed by this
23 Order be terminated. Respondent's failure to petition the Board to terminate the probation shall
24 extend the probation period. Whether to lift/terminate the probation is within the sole discretion
25 of the Board.

26 20. Failure to comply with any provision of this Consent Agreement is an act of

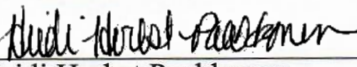
1 unprofessional conduct pursuant to A.R.S. §32-2061(16)(aa), which is violating a formal order,
2 terms of probation, a consent agreement or a stipulation issued or entered into by the Board.

3 21. If Respondent violates this Order in any way or fails to fulfill the requirements of
4 this Order, the Board, after giving the Respondent notice and the opportunity to be heard, may
5 revoke, suspend or take other disciplinary actions against Respondent's license. The issue at
6 such a hearing will be limited solely to whether this Order has been violated.

7 **BOARD ACCEPTS, SIGNS AND DATES THIS CONSENT AGREEMENT**

8 ARIZONA STATE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGIST EXAMINERS

9
10 DATED this 2nd day of April, 2024.

11 
12 Heidi Herbst Paakkonen
Executive Director

13 **ORIGINAL** filed electronically
14 this 2nd day of April, 2024 with:

15 Arizona State Board of
16 Psychologist Examiners
1740 W. Washington, Suite 3403
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

17 **COPY** of the foregoing sent by electronic mail
18 this 2nd day of April, 2024 to:

19 Bret Ringdahl, Ph.D.
20 Email Address on file
Respondent

21 **COPY** of the foregoing mailed via email (jeanne.galvin@azag.gov)
22 this 2nd day of April, 2024 to:

23 Jeanne M. Galvin
24 Assistant Attorney General
2005 North Central Ave. SGD/LES
Phoenix, Arizona 85004
Jeanne.galvin@azag.gov
Attorney for the State of Arizona

25
26 By: 