



STATE OF MAINE
 BOARD OF NURSING
 158 STATE HOUSE STATION
 AUGUSTA, MAINE
 04333-0158

ANGUS S. KING, JR.
 GOVERNOR

MYRA A. BROADWAY, J.D., M.S., R.N.
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

IN RE:

SHIRLEY COTTON, R.N.) **CONSENT AGREEMENT**
 of Westbrook, Maine) **REGARDING WARNING**
 License #R031808)

INTRODUCTION

This document is a Consent Agreement regarding Shirley Cotton's license to practice professional nursing in the State of Maine, entered into pursuant to 32 M.R.S.A. § 2105-A(1-A) and 10 M.R.S.A. § 8003(5). The parties to this Consent Agreement are Shirley Cotton, R.N., the Maine State Board of Nursing ("the Board") and the Department of Attorney General, State of Maine. This Consent Agreement arose out of an informal conference held on June 10, 1998 regarding information received from the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice.

FACTS

1. Shirley Cotton was terminated from her employment as a hospice nurse by Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice ("VNA").
2. In hospice care, the family unit is considered the "patient."
3. While providing hospice services to a family, Shirley Cotton developed a personal relationship with the spouse (husband) of a terminally ill patient (wife).
4. The personal relationship between husband and Ms. Cotton caused friction between husband and wife.
5. The terminally ill patient requested that Ms. Cotton be replaced by another nurse.
6. Ms. Cotton initiated a discussion with the terminally ill patient about the friction and believed, following that discussion, that the issue had been resolved.
7. Wife indicated to Ms. Cotton that she wanted to withdraw her request for another nurse, stating that she had been irrational.



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8. Ms. Cotton failed to seek guidance from VNA regarding the developing relationship between her and the husband prior to the death of the wife.
9. Ms. Cotton was not aware of the entire document containing Hospice Standards.
10. After the wife's death, the husband invited Ms. Cotton to coffee; Ms. Cotton discussed this invitation with her supervisor.
11. Ms. Cotton did not believe that she was acting unprofessionally.
12. The Board finds that Ms. Cotton engaged in unprofessional conduct by crossing a professional boundary.

AGREEMENT

1. Ms. Cotton's conduct in this matter constitutes grounds for discipline under 32 M.R.S.A. § 2105-A(2)(F). Ms. Cotton is hereby **WARNED**.
2. As a result of this agreement, the Board agrees to take no further disciplinary action upon these facts.
3. Ms. Cotton understands that this Consent Agreement constitutes disciplinary action on her license to practice nursing in the State of Maine. This Consent Agreement may be amended only in writing signed by all parties. Ms. Cotton understands that she does not have to execute this Consent Agreement and that she has the right to consult with an attorney before entering this Consent Agreement. Ms. Cotton affirms that she executes this Consent Agreement of her own free will.
4. This Consent Agreement becomes effective upon the last necessary signature below.

DATED: 9-16-98


Shirley E. Cotton, R.N.
SHIRLEY E. COTTON, R.N.

DATED: 9/16/98

John G. Richardson
JOHN G. RICHARDSON, ESQ.
Counsel to the Licensee

**FOR THE MAINE STATE BOARD
OF NURSING:**


DATED: Sept 24, 1998



MYRA A. BROADWAY, J.D., M.S., R.N.
Executive Director

**FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL:**

DATED: Sept. 25, 1998



SUSAN A. SPARACO
Assistant Attorney General
Counsel to the Board