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State Board of Psychologist Examiners
Marie Gokim, Executive Secretary.
P. O. Box 7458
Bismarck, ND
58507-7458

Dear Ms. Gokim:

Please see that the correct people from the Executive Board get this and otherwise consider it a private communication.

This is exactly what happened, what I am doing, and what I propose to do about it.

As many of the people who will see this letter know, I survived some horrific abuse in my childhood. Everyone who did this is now dead and I see no reason to make detailed disclosure to any but my therapist. That is the remote diathesis.

The melancholic depressions and anxiety attacks became worse as I started to do the evaluations of sexually dangerous individuals. I couldn't sleep. I didn't know what to do. In retrospect I can see that because of my own issues I should have told Dr. Etherington immediately and let somebody else do the work. I found it appalling and frightening. My own sexual issue was primarily that I have been so frightened of the world and of women that I mostly used pornography and masturbation as an outlet. I had been able to be a partner with a number of exceptionally kind and gentle women.

At the same time my last real partner with whom I have always been associated moved to further her career. I missed her so much. I began to drink at night to try and get some sleep. For some compulsive reason I do not yet fully understand, I downloaded from the net pornographic depictions of everything with which I was working. This included some pictures of girls who were about the same age I had been and these were full nudes. I have certainly seen all forms of full sexual activity but I am mostly attracted to the solo poses. These are sufficiently not frightening.

I knew I was ill but I didn't know how ill. Then, one day I saw the prairie grass moving in the wind as I was driving. It reminded me of my background in Buddhism. I tried to start to heal myself because just then Dr. Etherington and the hospital released the motto. "recovery is possible."

I quit drinking. I knew I was depressed but I didn't know how much. I remember telling Dr. Etherington, "I think I'm more depressed than I think I am." I kept wanting to suicide, pushed the idea out of my mind, and didn't even recognize how bad that was fully. I tried Effexor and that didn't work real well. I returned to Zen meditation (zazen) and at first all I could see was how dirty my mind felt. I was able to make a break from the compulsive viewing of pornography.

I was always very careful to have every report I ever wrote checked by at least one other person. I knew I was ill and so I stayed away from therapy except for one suicidal patient. I left excellent notes and that patient did extremely well, being discharged. I have never done anything that would compromise the welfare of any patient.

Finally, after dumping the porn and enough zazen, I had enough insight to see that I was ill. I got on generic fluoxetine and, for the first time, the suicidal wish went away. I am apparently very biologically hit. Given everything I know about childhood trauma and my own near death from abuse and neglect, I know I am injured in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal cortical axis and probably have some specific additional injury in the inferior left rear hemisphere. The dose of fluoxetine had to be driven to 60 mg/day and then potentiated with mirtazapine at 22.5 and some clonazepam as needed.

Just as I was finally getting my life back, Homeland Security Agency served me a search warrant to investigate my computers for child porn. The fact that I had deleted this from myself does not seem to mean much to them.

I told Dr. Etherington. I quit my job. My Zen teacher agreed that it was just my karma come to fruition. Dr. Mclean said I would come out the other side. I don't know my legal status. I will get back into therapy at the local HSC. I take my medications. I do zazen twice a day. I am not practicing now. I would like to practice again. I believe recovery is possible.

Sincerely,

Joseph Belanger
Cc: Dr. Etherington