



SANCTIONS IMPOSED AGAINST IBCLCs

Per the IBCLC Commission Disciplinary Procedures, the IBCLC Commission reserves the right to make public notification of the following sanctions imposed against IBCLCs:

Permanent Revocations of Certification: IBCLC certification for individuals has been permanently revoked and they are permanently barred from applying for re-instatement of certification as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.

Suspension of Certification: IBCLC certification for individuals has been suspended for a designated period of time.

Public Reprimand: IBCLC makes public notification of written reprimands to IBCLC certificants.

The following sanctions reference the IBCLC Commission Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs effective November 1, 2011, Updated September 2015.

2025 Public Reprimand: Savannah Sparks, PharmD of Columbia, South Carolina: Effective August 7, 2025.

The IBCLC Commission found Dr. Sparks to be in violation of the *Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs (CPC) Principle 2.3: Be responsible and accountable for personal conduct and practice*; and *Principle 2.5: Respect Intellectual Property*. The complaints to the IBCLC were from third party social media users who disapproved of Dr. Sparks' social media content. The complaints were not from clients receiving care from Dr. Sparks. At the time of the complaints, Dr. Sparks displayed the IBCLC certification mark on her social media platforms while using her social media platforms to share her personal views regarding current events. The complaints regarding Dr. Sparks' content, which included objections to her use of profanity, were unrelated to client care. Dr. Sparks' content was determined by the IBCLC Commission Ethics & Discipline Committee to be unprofessional because her use of the IBCLC certification mark in association with her social media content made a professional connection between Dr. Sparks' conduct and IBCLC, thereby inappropriately linking the unprofessional conduct with the IBCLC certification mark.

IBCLC Commission imposed a sanction of public reprimand and five (5) hours of Continuing Education (in addition to the requirements for recertification) related to Professional Ethics, the Code of Professional Conduct and professionalism on social media. Dr. Sparks timely provided proof of completion.

Respondent shall not use the IBCLC certification mark in association with unprofessional activities (making a professional connection to the IBCLC certification mark) or activities unrelated to lactation consultant services, on any of her social media platforms.

2021 Public Reprimand: Xiaoting Tian 田晓婷 of Shanghai, China: Effective: March 19, 2021.

IBLCE found Ms. Tian to be in violation of the *Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs* (CPC) Principle 2.5 Respect intellectual property rights and Principle 6.1 Behave honestly and fairly as a health professional. IBLCE found that Ms. Tian transmitted information about several IBCLC examination questions following the examination. IBLCE imposes a sanction of public reprimand and requires the Respondent to complete a minimum of four (4) hours of continuing education regarding the Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs, Ethics and/or Intellectual Property.

Additionally, per IBLCE security policies, Ms. Tian is precluded from reapplying for the IBCLC for a specified period.

2019 Public Reprimand: Cassandra Romero-Schroeder of Riverside, California: Effective

December 14, 2019. IBLCE found Ms. Romero-Schroeder to be in violation of the *Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs* (CPC) Principles 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 6.1 and 7.4. Ms. Romero-Schroeder, through her Facebook breastfeeding support group, did not adhere to an IBCLCs duty to provide care to meet clients' individual needs that is culturally appropriate and informed by the best available evidence; operate within the limits of the scope of practice; collaborate with other members of the healthcare team to provide unified and comprehensive care; be responsible and accountable for personal conduct and practice and did not act in compliance with the *IBCLC Trademark Use Policy*. Ms. Romero-Schroeder must remove information from her Facebook breastfeeding support group that is not evidence-based or/and is outside the Scope of Practice for IBCLCs. Respondent is referred to the *IBLCE Advisory Opinion: Professionalism in the Social Media Age* for review and professional education.

2019 Suspension of Certification: Brittany Maalona of California, USA: Indefinite suspension effective April 19, 2019. Ms. Maalona was convicted of Embezzlement by Employee in the Superior Court of California and received a five-year probation sentence and court-ordered payment of restitution. While working as a Manager and Lactation Consultant and earning supervised Lactation Specific Clinical Experience hours towards her IBCLC Pathway 1 application, Ms. Maalona appropriated funds rendered for services performed on behalf of the IBCLC owned breastfeeding center. Ms. Maalona failed to report her felony conviction in 2017 per IBLCE Scope of Practice for IBCLCs. Ms. Maalona's IBLCE credential shall be indefinitely suspended until such time as she is able to demonstrate that she is released from court ordered probation and that she has paid the full restitution and court costs and is competent to return to the practice of lactation consulting as determined by IBLCE. The IBLCE Ethics & Discipline Panel has recommended continuing education related to professional ethics. Should Ms. Maalona seek to apply for the credential at a time when she is no longer suspended, she must demonstrate that she meets all then current requirements for certification. Ms. Maalona must provide all documentation that verifies completion of the pathway requirements. IBLCE will require Ms. Maalona to provide proof of education, employment, coursework and proof of any of the initial eligibility requirements in a complete, accurate and timely manner. Failure to do so will result in a denial to sit the IBCLC examination and/or disciplinary action pursuant to the Code of Professional Conduct. Ms. Maalona must remove the IBCLC credential from websites, social media platforms and all other materials for the duration of the suspension.

2019 Suspension of Certification: Ming-Zhu Dong 董明珠 of Dalian, China: Suspension for one year effective March 2, 2019. IBLCE found that Ming-Zhu Dong's use of nonstandard terminology regarding breast massage to expel breastmilk from deep reservoirs is not supported by scientific evidence and does not meet the obligation imposed on IBCLCs to adhere to a standard of reasonable

care. IBLCE also found that, when promoting her breast massage business on social media, Ming-Zhu Dong failed to exercise independent judgement, avoid conflicts of interest and failed to maintain personal integrity and found that Ming-Zhu Dong failed to uphold the professional standards expected of an IBCLC by using the IBCLC credential to promote her breast massage business. Ming-Zhu Dong must remove the IBCLC credential from websites, social media platforms and all other materials for the duration of the suspension and the Ethics & Discipline Committee reserves the right to impose or alter the sanction, including a sanction of indefinite suspension or revocation of the credential, for failure to comply. (**Subsequent note:** This individual's certification expired on 12/31/19.)

2019 Indefinite Suspension and subsequent 2020 Permanent Revocation of Certification:

Robin Hunter Serro of Virginia USA initially received an indefinite suspension effective January 19, 2019. IBLCE found Ms. Serro to be in violation of CPC Principle 2.3 Be responsible and accountable for personal conduct and practice; Principle 5.3 Withdraw voluntarily from professional practice if the IBCLC has a physical or mental disability that could be detrimental to clients; Principle 6.2 Withdraw voluntarily from professional practice if the IBCLC has engaged in substance abuse that could affect the IBCLC's practice; and Principle 8.2.2. Agree that a violation of this CPC includes any matter in which the IBCLC is disciplined by a state, province or other level of government and at least one of the grounds for discipline is the same as, or substantially equivalent to, this CPC's principle. Ms. Serro entered into a Consent Order, a public record, with the Virginia Board of Nursing, in which Ms. Serro admitted that she had violated applicable law in Virginia, including substance abuse, resulting in the indefinite suspension of her license to practice professional nursing. Ms. Serro may only seek IBLCE certification in the future upon meeting established conditions. Ms. Serro must remove the IBCLC credential from websites, social media platforms and all other materials for the duration of the suspension.

Subsequent note: Effective November 10, 2020, Ms. Serro's certification is permanently revoked and she may not be considered for IBCLC certification in the future. Any and all certificates or other materials requested by IBLCE must be returned promptly to IBLCE. IBLCE found Ms. Serro had not complied with the terms of the sanction of indefinite suspension imposed by the Ethics & Discipline Panel. IBLCE found Ms. Serro had not complied with the Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs, as she was disseminating information that was jeopardising public health and safety and she did not respond to numerous communications as part of the Ethics & Discipline process in violation of Principle 8: Comply with the IBLCE Disciplinary Procedures.

2016 Public Reprimand: **Jennifer Tow** of Connecticut USA and France: Effective April 27, 2016 for providing recommendations which were not informed by the best available evidence (Principle 1.2 of the *Code of Professional Conduct effective November 1, 2011*), for operating outside the scope of practice by making recommendations based on photographs without taking a history or conducting examination (Principle 2.1 of the Code of Professional Conduct effective November 1, 2011), for disclosing personal and private information in a non-private setting beyond the client's health care team (Principle 3.1 of the *Code of Professional Conduct effective November 1, 2011*). The Appeal Board affirmed the sanction of public reprimand on these bases as determined by the Panel below and strongly encourages the certificant to obtain 5 CERPs or other training related to these violations of the Code of Professional Conduct and provide evidence of the completed training to IBLCE within one year.

The following sanctions reference the *IBLCE Code of Ethics for IBCLCs* effective December 1, 2004.

2010 Public Reprimand: **Christine Percy** of New South Wales Australia: Effective March 20, 2010 for repeated failure to comply with the IBLCE disciplinary process. Ms. Percy consistently refused to provide a written response to a complaint filed against her. Ms. Percy's certification as an IBCLC

expired during the course of the investigation of the complaint. The IBLCE Ethics & Discipline Committee has determined that Ms. Percy is permitted to seek future Certification by Examination. However, should she seek certification in this manner, she must fully cooperate with the Ethics & Discipline process by answering the complaint that was filed against her. Only after Ms. Percy's answer has been received can the Ethics & Discipline Committee proceed with its investigation. If, upon investigation, the Committee again finds that probable cause for disciplinary action exists, Ms. Percy must fully cooperate with the disciplinary process specified by the Committee.

2009 Public Reprimand: **Pamela Hirsch** of Illinois USA: Effective September 8, 2009 for repeated failure to comply with the IBLCE disciplinary process. Ms. Hirsch consistently refused to provide a written response to a complaint filed against her, therefore, her certification as an IBCLC is suspended until the IBLCE Ethics and Discipline Committee receives a written response from the respondent that addresses the charges of the complaint and the charges have been satisfactorily resolved. If Ms. Hirsch voluntarily surrenders her certification as an IBCLC and subsequently applies for reinstatement of her IBCLC certification, she must satisfy the conditions of Article XXVIII, Section B of the IBLCE Procedures for Discipline dated January 1, 2007, i.e. she must fully cooperate with the Ethics and Discipline process by responding to the Complaint. Only after her answer is received can the Ethics and Discipline Committee proceed with its investigation. Furthermore, if upon investigation, the Committee again finds that Probable Cause exists, the Respondent must fully cooperate with the disciplinary process described in the IBLCE Procedures for Discipline dated January 1, 2007.

2005 Permanent Revocation of Certification: **Heasook Kim** of Seoul Korea and California USA: Effective February 24, 2005 for serious and repeated breaches of the security of IBLCE's international examination. Ms. Kim admitted that she had copied photos used in the 1999, 2000, and 2001 IBLCE examinations onto slides and retained them for her use.

2002 Permanent Revocation of Certification: **Chris Haffner-Eaton** of Oregon USA: Effective August 21, 2002 for theft of items from exhibitors at the International Lactation Consultant Association conference in Acapulco Mexico In July 2001.