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State suspends Mercer Island social worker's license after charges filed in sex claim

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Social worker Thomas A. Gill was charged with molesting a boy with autism.

By [Maureen O'Hagan](#)

The license of a social worker who counseled children with autism and attachment disorders was suspended this week after King County prosecutors charged him with a sex crime involving a 15-year-old male client.

Thomas A. Gill was charged last month with indecent liberties and communication with a minor for immoral purposes. Police say Gill was found naked in his home with the teen, who has autism.

On Monday, the Department of Health issued an emergency suspension of Gill's social-work license. He is the co-founder of the Attachment Center Northwest, a Kirkland treatment center for children, and lectured at seminars for treatment providers. An answering machine at the center says Gill no longer works there.

Gill's attorney, David Allen, said Gill "disputes the charges and we're going to challenge them in court. Hopefully, everybody will afford him the presumption of innocence."

According to court records, Gill, 62, had been counseling the 15-year-old for three years. Sometimes Gill also provided "respite care" for the boy, taking him overnight at his Mercer Island home. Parents of children with disabilities often use respite providers for a break in care, although it's often in the child's home.

The boy, who is referred to only by his initials in charging documents, told police that in mid-May, a family member of Gill's stopped by the home and found the two of them nude. When the family member confronted Gill, he explained that he and the boy had just been taking showers one after the other, charging documents state.

“[The family member] stated that he felt more was going on” but that Gill denied it, the documents state.

That incident was only the latest time Gill asked the boy to “strip down” naked, the boy told police. “[The boy] stated he had gotten used to what he was being asked to do by Tom,” charging documents state.

The documents also state the boy said Gill “taught him how to put a condom on,” talked with him about sex and touched his penis, among other activities.

The boy is described as a “high-functioning” special-education student who can communicate clearly. Mercer Island police are continuing to investigate the case, as is the Department of Health.

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