

An Introduction to the Value of Supervision

If you are interested in earning a license to independently practice clinical social work in California, you have an interest in supervision. The law requires at least two years worth of post-graduate supervised experience for you to be qualified to take your licensing examinations; however, the value of the relationship with your supervisor goes further than merely qualifying you to sit for your licensing examinations.

The value of clinical supervision to your development as a professional cannot be emphasized enough. Clinical supervision allows new professionals in the field to benefit from the experience and knowledge of licensed mental health professionals. Clinical supervision represents an opportunity for you to learn and mature into an experienced mental health professional.

Considering the importance of your clinical supervision relationship, the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) has developed this brochure to assist students and registrants in selecting and/or developing a positive working relationship and supervision experience with their clinical supervisors. Whether you are selecting a clinical supervisor or working in an environment where a supervisor is assigned, you should be aware of the responsibilities and expectations of you (the supervisee) and those of the clinical supervisor.

Develop a Working, Productive Relationship with Your Supervisor

Depending on your setting, workload, and type of supervision (individual vs. group), you probably spend between 1-4 hours of your week in supervision. The time you spend working in the field outweighs the amount of time you spend with your supervisor. The BBS would like to offer several strategies to help

you better maximize the time you spend in supervision:

- Spend some time at the beginning of your supervisory relationship going over goals and objectives. Also, set aside some time in future meetings to revisit these goals and objectives.
- Be proactive with your supervisor. Make sure you are getting the value that you expected from supervision. Supervision should be a collaborative experience.
- Take a moment to thoroughly read the *Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of an Associate Clinical Social Worker*. This form outlines some basic expectations from the supervisor.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask Questions

Whether you are personally selecting your supervisor or meeting your employer-assigned supervisor for the first time, you should ask some questions to better understand the professional background of your supervisor and his or her knowledge base. Questions to consider asking include:

- What type of license do you possess?
- Is your license current and valid?
- When were you licensed?
- Have you completed the mandatory supervision course?
- Have you practiced psychotherapy or provided direct supervision to associates or marriage and family therapist interns or trainees who

perform psychotherapy for at least two years within the last five years?

- Have you ever provided supervision to an Associate Clinical Social Worker before, and if so, how many?
- What is your practice background (private practice, agency, school, etc.)?
- Do you practice from a particular theoretical orientation, and if so, will other theoretical orientations be discussed?
- Do you have any specialty areas of practice?

Using Clinical Supervision to Prepare for the Licensing Examinations

Effective clinical supervision should prepare you to pass your licensing examinations. Some future licensees choose to wait until 6 months before their examination to begin studying. A more effective strategy would be to use the content tested on the examination to frame your supervised experience.

The BBS *LCSW Examination Study Guide* and examination candidate handbooks provide sample questions and the examination content outline. The examination content outline is a particularly effective study aid. Once you have reviewed the content outline, take it to your supervisor and discuss how your current work is preparing you for the examination. Revisit this practice on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis to ensure your supervision and experience supports your goal of licensure.

Also, ask your supervisor if he or she can provide you with any insight into exam preparation strategies. Supervisors have often supervised and mentored a number of

“licensees-to-be,” so they might have some useful advice on examination preparation.

Stay on Top of Your Required Supervised Experience

You are most likely not the only person gaining hours under your supervisor. Supervisors often supervise multiple individuals working towards different professional licenses, all with different experience and supervision requirements. You would be well served to familiarize yourself with your experience and supervision requirements. Here are some resources available to you to help you understand the requirements relating to your hours of required supervise experience:

- The “Applicant/Registrant” section of the BBS Web site
- *Frequently Asked Questions Relating to Associate Clinical Social Workers* (available via the Web site in “Forms and Publications”)
- Current and past issues of *BBS News* (available via the Web site in “Forms and Publications”)

Another helpful feature on the Web site is the Experience Calculator. This calculator uses a spreadsheet to help you track how close you are to finishing your supervised experience requirement. This feature is available for free at www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/exp_calc.shtml.

Other Important Facts About Supervision

- The status of your supervisor’s license affects your ability to claim hours. Visit the “Online License Verification” section of the Web site to verify your supervisor’s status.

- The status of your registration is important too. Renew your registration early to ensure no hours are lost due to a delinquent renewal.
- As an Associate Clinical Social Worker, you are required to gain a minimum of 1,700 hours of experience under an LCSW.
- Supervisees who wish to file a complaint against their supervisor can do so using the *Consumer Complaint Form* available in the Forms and Publications section of the Web site.

Who to Contact for Questions

If you or your supervisor has questions relating to your required hours of experience or any other topics explored in this brochure, please contact the BBS.

Social Work Evaluator – (916) 574 – 7851
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Email: BBSWebmaster@dca.ca.gov

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Sign up for the BBS’ free email subscriber list to receive updates regarding law changes, enforcement actions, meetings, and more.

A Guide to Supervision For Associate Clinical Social Workers



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