An Introduction to the Value of Supervision

If you are interested in earning a license to independently practice professional clinical counseling in California, you have an interest in supervision. The law requires at least two years worth of 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 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.

**Supervisor Minimum Qualifications**

Licensed mental health professionals interested in providing supervision to Professional Clinical Counselor (PCC) Interns must meet certain minimum qualifications in order to supervise. The qualifications differ depending on the license type of the potential supervisor. Marriage and Family Therapists, Clinical Social Workers, Educational Psychologists, Professional Clinical Counselors, and licensed physicians and surgeons who are certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology are the licensed mental health professionals authorized to supervise PCC Interns. The following are some of the general qualifications needed to provide supervision to a PCC Intern.

**All Supervisors:**
- Possess a current and valid California license for at least two years prior to the commencement of supervision;
- Complete a six-hour supervision training within 60 days of commencement of supervision and every renewal period thereafter; and
- Practiced psychotherapy or provided direct supervision of Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW) or Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) Trainees or Interns who performed psychotherapy in two of the past five years immediately preceding the commencement of supervision.

**Don’t Be Afraid to Ask Questions**

Whether you are personally selecting your supervisor or meeting your 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 supervised PCC Interns, MFT Interns, or ASWs who perform psychotherapy for at least two years within the last five years?
- Have you ever provided supervision to a PCC Intern, 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 LPCC California Law and Ethics Examination Candidate Handbook and the National Board for Certified Counselor’s (NBCC) candidate handbook 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 examinations. 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 supervised experience:

- The “LPCC” section of the BBS Web site
- *Frequently Asked Questions Relating to PCC Trainees and Interns* (available on the BBS Web site under “Forms and Publications”)
- Current and past issues of *BBS Newsletters* (available on the BBS Web site under “Forms and Publications”)

**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.
- Once you are a PCC Intern registered with the BBS, the status of your registration is important too. Renew your registration early to ensure no hours are lost due to a delinquent renewal.
- 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 BBS 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.

The BBS’ LPCC Evaluators are available to answer questions relating to licensing requirements.

LPCC Evaluator contact information is available on the BBS Web site under the “Contact Us” section.

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