



Board of Behavioral Sciences

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LICENSED PROFESSIONAL CLINICAL COUNSELORS: ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT OF COUPLES AND FAMILIES

The scope of practice for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCCs) includes the assessment and treatment of individuals and groups. It does not include the assessment or treatment of couples or families unless the LPCC meets specific qualifications defined in California law* as follows:

Scope of Practice Qualifications to Assess and Treat Couples and Families

1. Six (6) semester units or nine (9) quarter units specifically focused on the theory and application of marriage and family therapy **OR** a named specialization or emphasis area on the qualifying degree in marriage and family therapy; marital and family therapy; marriage, family, and child counseling; or couple and family therapy.

AND

2. No less than 500 hours of documented supervised experience working directly with couples, families, or children.

AND

3. A minimum of six (6) hours of continuing education (CE) specific to marriage and family therapy during each license renewal cycle. The six (6) hours will count toward the required overall 36 hours of CE.

NEW REQUIREMENT EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2017

Board Confirmation of Qualifications Must be Provided to Clients and Supervisees

Effective January 1, 2017, LPCCs **must** obtain written confirmation from the Board stating that he or she meets the requirements to assess and treat couples and families **prior to** assessing or treating a couple or family client. Additionally, LPCCs must do the following:

- **Provide a copy** of the Board's written confirmation to couple or family clients prior to commencement of treatment. LPCCs already in the process of treating a couple or family must provide the client with a copy of the confirmation before any further sessions take place on or after January 1, 2017; **AND**

**Business and Professions Code section 4999.20 and Title 16, California Code of Regulations, sections 1820.5 and 1820.7, available in the Board's [Statutes and Regulations](#).*

- **Provide a copy** of the Board's written confirmation to the types of supervisees listed below, prior to commencement of supervision:
 - A marriage and family therapist trainee or associate marriage and family therapist
 - A LPCC or Associate Professional Clinical Counselor who is gaining the supervised experience necessary to treat couples or families
 - LPCCs already in the process of supervising any of the above individuals must provide the supervisee with a copy of the confirmation before any further supervision is conducted on or after January 1, 2017.

The *Request for Confirmation of Qualifications to Assess and Treat Couples and Families* form is available on the Board's [website](#).

Obtaining Supervised Experience with Couples, Families or Children

Associate Professional Clinical Counselors and LPCC licensees are temporarily exempt from the scope of practice limitation while gaining supervised experience, if obtained under the direct supervision of any of the following California licensees who have been practicing for at least two (2) years:

- A LPCC who has already met the scope of practice qualifications to treat couples and families and, after January 1, 2017, has obtained written confirmation from the Board of meeting the qualifications to treat couples and families;
- A Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist; OR
- Any of the following who have sufficient education and experience in treating couples and families to competently practice couples and family therapy in California:
 - Licensed Clinical Social Worker
 - Licensed Clinical Psychologist
 - Licensed Physician Certified in Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

Additionally, the supervisor must have received professional training in supervision, may not have provided therapeutic services to the supervisee, and must have a current and valid license that is not under suspension or probation.

Professional Clinical Counselor Students/Trainees are permitted to treat couples and families as part of their supervised practicum experience, but may not count that experience toward the 500 hours required to treat couples and families.