

**FACT SHEET AND FAQs:  
LICENSEE AND REGISTRANT  
ADVERTISING REQUIREMENTS**  
*Effective April 1, 2026*

The Board’s regulations pertaining to advertising by licensees, registrants (Associates) and MFT Trainees have been amended and take effect April 1, 2026.

This Fact Sheet is designed to assist you in evaluating your advertising, and answers frequently asked questions about advertising.

For examples of acceptable and unacceptable advertising content, refer to the following:

- [Advertising Examples for Licensees](#)
- [Advertising Examples for Associates and MFT Trainees](#)

*NOTE: If your advertising is determined to be out of compliance, the Board will issue a notification. In many instances, you’ll be given an opportunity to correct the issue before any formal action is taken.*

**DEFINITION OF “ADVERTISING”**

The definition of “advertising” is very broad. Advertising includes, but is not limited to<sup>1</sup>, any of the following:

- Public communication (including, but not limited to mail, television, radio, motion picture, newspaper, book, list or directory of healing arts practitioners, Internet, or other electronic communication);
- The issuance of any card, sign, or device to any person; or
- The causing, permitting, or allowing of any sign or marking on, or in, any building or structure, or in any newspaper or magazine or in any directory, or any printed matter whatsoever, with or without any limiting qualification.

There are exceptions for signs posted in religious buildings and notices in bulletins mailed to religious congregations. For more information, see [section 651](#) of the Business and Professions Code (BPC).

<sup>1</sup> BPC Sections 4980.03(e) (LMFT); 4989.49 (LEP); 4992.2 (LCSW); and 4999.12(j) (LPCC)

## UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN ADVERTISING

The following are considered unprofessional conduct<sup>2</sup>:

- Advertising in a manner that is false, fraudulent, misleading or deceptive.
- Misrepresentation of the type or status of a license or registration;
- Misrepresenting education
- Misrepresenting professional qualifications; or
- Misrepresenting professional affiliations.

It is important to consider your advertising from the viewpoint of a consumer, and how something, even though it may not be obvious to you, could be problematic. The terms “misleading” or “misrepresentation” do not simply mean something that is outright false. For example, it could be an omission, or it could be that information required to be included in advertising is difficult to find. It is especially important that Associates do not give the impression that they are licensed and/or working independently. For more information, consult with your professional association or an attorney.

## LICENSEES: MINIMUM CONTENT REQUIREMENTS AND ACCEPTABLE ABBREVIATIONS

**Licensees** must include ALL of the following minimum information in any advertisement:

1. Your first and last name, as filed with the Board;
2. Your license number; and
3. Your complete license title, or an allowable abbreviation, as shown below:

If you are a...	The following exact titles and abbreviations are acceptable:
<b>Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist” or “MFT” or “LMFT”</li></ul>
<b>Licensed Clinical Social Worker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Licensed Clinical Social Worker” or “LCSW”</li></ul>
<b>Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor” or “LPCC”</li></ul>
<b>Licensed Educational Psychologist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Licensed Educational Psychologist” or “LEP”</li></ul>

<sup>2</sup> BPC Sections 4982(f),(p) (LMFT); 4989.54(e),(l) (LEP); 4992.3(g),(q) (LCSW); and 4999.90(f),(p) (LPCC)

## REGISTRANTS: MINIMUM CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

**Registrants (Associates)** must include all of the following minimum information in any advertisement:

1. Your first and last name, as filed with the Board;
2. Your registration number;
3. Your complete registration title, with acceptable options shown below;
4. The name of your employer or the name of the entity for which you volunteer; and
5. That you are supervised by a licensed person. Acceptable Examples: “Supervised by a licensed person”; “Supervised by a licensed counselor”; “Supervised by a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist”; Supervised by a LPCC, license #99999”.

If you are a...	The following exact titles are acceptable:
<b>Registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist<sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist”</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• “Registered Associate MFT”</li> </ul>
<b>Registered Associate Clinical Social Worker<sup>2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Registered Associate Clinical Social Worker”</li> </ul>
<b>Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor<sup>3</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor”</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• “Registered Associate PCC”</li> </ul>

## REGISTRANTS: ACCEPTABLE ABBREVIATIONS

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation **AMFT** may be used in an advertisement, but ONLY if “Registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist” is ALSO included.

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviation **ASW** may be used in an advertisement, but ONLY if “Registered Associate Clinical Social Worker” is ALSO included. **Use of “ACSW” is not permitted** as it conflicts with the name of a certification often obtained by social workers.

<sup>3</sup> The abbreviation **APCC** may be used in an advertisement, but ONLY if “Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor” is ALSO included.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR MFT TRAINEES

Requirements for MFT Trainees are somewhat different. Any advertisement by or on behalf of an MFT Trainee must include all of the following<sup>3</sup>:

- That the Trainee is a “marriage and family therapist trainee”; and
- The name of the Trainee’s employer (or the entity for which the Trainee volunteers); and
- That the Trainee is supervised by a licensed person; and
- The supervisor’s license designation or abbreviation; and
- The supervisor’s license number.

## USE OF A NICKNAME

An associate or licensee may use a nickname or former legal name, but only if the advertisement also includes their first and last name as filed with the Board. If a nickname is used, the nickname shall not be false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive as specified by [section 651](#) of the Business and Professions Code (BPC). MFT Trainees are NOT permitted to use a nickname or former legal name.

## USE OF THE TERMS “PSYCHOTHERAPY”, “PSYCHOTHERAPIST” OR “PSYCHOLOGY”

The term “psychology” may not be used as it is a protected term reserved for Licensed Psychologists. Use of the terms “psychotherapy” or “psychotherapist” is permissible for licensees and associates provided that the advertisement contains all information required by law, as described in this publication. However, Trainees must be practicing under a licensed mental health professional if they wish to include the title or term “psychotherapist.”

## USE OF ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

Reference to academic credentials is permitted in your advertisement as long as your degree is earned (not an honorary degree or conferred without actual study) and representations and statements made about your degree are not misleading. If you have a doctorate degree in a field related to psychotherapy you may list that degree abbreviation or title. The use of “Dr.”, even if your degree is in a related field, is a grey area in law since it could, in some situations, be misunderstood by the public as a medical doctor. The Board recommends that you consult with your professional association or an attorney prior to such use.

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<sup>3</sup> BPC Section 4980.48

## ADVERTISING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. My employer advertises my services. Is there anything I need to do?

Yes. It is critical that you review any advertising produced by your employer that include you. You have the obligation to ensure that your employer's advertisements that include you are not false, fraudulent, misleading or deceptive as discussed above, and contain all required information. You, as the licensee or registrant, are ultimately responsible even though you did not produce the advertisement.

### 2. Are there any special requirements pertaining to websites?

A website is a type of advertising, so all of the information that you are required to provide in advertising must appear on your website. However, due to the format there are important additional considerations. All of the required information should be easy to find and appear relatively near each other. For example, if you were to place your license number in a very small font at the bottom of a long page, or in a normal sized font but buried on a different page of your website, it may not be considered in compliance.

Associates should review their website (or their employer's website that contains their information) carefully to ensure that it does not give the impression that they are licensed or practicing independently. For example, the required statement about being under the supervision of a licensed person should not be difficult to find on the website and should appear near your registration information. It also should not be in such a small font that it would be difficult to read or locate.

### 3. Are there any special requirements pertaining to social media?

Social media is considered a type of advertising, so all of the information that you are required to provide in advertising must appear on your social media. If the information doesn't fit in your bio, you will need to find an easy way for readers to find your information, such as a link to a website that contains all of the required information.

Associates should review their social media bio and posts carefully to ensure that they do not give the impression that they are licensed. Be sure to refer to the ethics code for your profession for other important considerations for use of social media.

### 4. What title can I use if I've applied for an Associate registration under the 90-day rule?

The law does not address associates who are working under the [90-day rule](#). However, the Board recommends that associates pending registration follow all of the laws that pertain to associates. Instead of your registration number, a statement that says "Pending Registration with the Board of Behavioral Sciences" or similar would be acceptable. Consult with your professional associate or an attorney for additional information.

**5. Why do I also need to list my full name as filed with the Board when using a nickname or former legal name?**

This is necessary to ensure that consumers are able to locate your license or registration record and provides an assurance that they have located the correct person's record. If you wish to use your nickname only, or your former legal name, you will need to pursue a legal name change process and provide legal documentation of the change to the Board.

**6. Can a MFT Trainee use a nickname or former legal name?**

MFT Trainees are not permitted to use a nickname or former legal name. Once they have registered as an Associate with the Board this would be permitted.

**7. Is there anything else I should consider in advertising?**

It is important to consult your professional association's code of ethics regarding advertising, as they contain additional ethical considerations.