



Secretary Carol Aichele

PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORKS, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS



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Attention All Supervisors

By Rhoda R. Shralow, LMFT, Board Member

The supervisory process is an important element in the journey towards licensure. It is essential to the professional development of the licensed clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist and professional counselor. Supervision is an important responsibility. This article is for all of our licensed professionals who are or who may become supervisors.

We highly recommend to the supervisor and supervisee that they understand the process from the beginning of the journey. Sadly, we on the Board have found that too often, with the best of intentions, the proper requirements haven't been fulfilled.

Although we sympathize with the applicant, it is our job to adhere to the requirements set out by the Act and the Regulations. When one takes on the responsibility of supervision, that supervisor should be responsible for understanding the requirements. Unfortunately it is only the supervisee who is penalized if the requirements aren't fulfilled appropriately.

Our first recommendation is to download the application for licensure in the appropriate field at the very beginning of supervision. In addition to the application, there is also information for each profession on the FAQs page on our website.

Here is a brief summary of the essential points. 3000 hours of supervision are required for all 3 professions. 1500 hours of the 3000 hours must be provided by a licensed professional in that particular profession = This means that LSWs must be supervised by LCSWs, Professional Counselors must be supervised by LPCs, and MFTs must be supervised by LMFTs who are also AAMFT Approved Supervisors. The other 1500 hours may be supervised by another licensed mental health professional in a related field. Please, supervisors, make sure that you fulfill the requirements for your supervisee.

Of the 3000 hours, 1500 hours must be direct contact. That may include assessment, consultation, therapy, psycho-education. The additional 1500 hours may include activities that are part of one's professional responsibilities but are not direct client contact. Examples of these are case documentation and recordkeeping, client advocacy, activities that involve, support or enhance work with clients. Administrative duties cannot be counted, e.g. completing budget documentation, administrative supervision of another individual, office procedures.

We rely on the supervisor to determine which activities constitute direct contact and which are in the second category. If in doubt, please contact the Board.

One hour of supervision is required for every 20 hours of work. Half of supervision must be individual; the other half may be in group.

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Under the present regulations, all supervision must be in person. Also, no supervisor may supervise more than 6 supervisees for licensure at any time. We know that this sounds overwhelming. However, the essence is: 1) the supervisor is responsible for keeping track of the supervisee's hours worked; 2) the supervisor is responsible for providing the appropriate amount of supervision required for those hours; 3) the supervisor determines direct contact, and 4) the supervisor fulfills the requirements set out by the Law. The supervisor should maintain records that the Board could review if necessary.

For those of you who are supervisees, there are more regulations that you must fulfill. For example, the supervision can take place in no less than 2 years or longer than 6 years. You must work in a single setting for 15 hours per week for a period of 6 months or 30 to 50 hours per week for at least a 3 month period.

Again, I urge you to check the FAQs page, contact the Board, and read the application carefully.

Quality supervision ensures not only the future of the supervisee but the future of our professions. We know that all supervisors will do their utmost to maintain the excellent standards of our professions.

Making Use of the Law and Regulations

By Renee J. Cardone, MSW, LCSW, Board Member

The Board wishes to take this opportunity to remind licensees, and potential licensees, and supervisors, that Pennsylvania law and pertinent regulations, including the Ethical Practices and Standards of Professional Conduct, are the primary sources for what must be

done to get licensed, stay licensed, and/or supervise a candidate toward licensure in social work, marriage and family therapy, and professional counseling.

As background, a quick review may be in order. The law is passed (and then sometimes subsequently modified) by the Pennsylvania legislature. This is usually done with significant input from interested parties, most notably the professional associations and practitioners. After the law is passed, it falls to the Board to write regulations, standards of practice and ethical guidelines that implement the provisions of the law. Again, this is done by the Board, but often with input from the professional organizations and other constituents. Once proposed regulations are written, they must undergo a lengthy regulatory review process that allows for comment by professional associations, the legislative committees, professionals and the public. Feedback and comments are reviewed by the Board. Modifications are often made to the proposed regulations before they begin the process of final rulemaking. This whole process is public and provides for input from anyone interested to review and/or comment on regulations at any time during the proposed rulemaking process.

Once the law and regulations become final (until the next revision!), the Board and anyone whose license is under the purview of the Board, use them to inform and make decisions about how to become licensed, how to maintain the license and what events can trigger disciplinary actions. This is why the law and regulations are so important to understanding our options and obligations as licensees, potential licensees, or supervisors.

It is essential that the members of the Board refer to the law and regulations regularly. It is also critical that licensees, potential licensees, and supervisors refer to the law and regulations. Again, these are primary sources. It is therefore very important to read them, refer to them, and keep abreast of any changes to them. The law, regulations, and ethical practices and

standards of professional conduct are all available to be read online, or you can request a “hard copy” from the Board.

Thus, the best way for licensees, potential licensees and supervisors to know and understand what is required of them is to familiarize themselves with the law and regulations and refer to them as primary documents. Everyone would agree that the law and regulations require careful reading, critical analysis and attention to detail. They can be challenging. The Board has also posted on the website Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that help clarify the law and regulations and office personnel at the Board office will also answer questions. In addition, members of the Board regularly attend professional conferences around the state to both educate themselves about the law and regulations and to hear professionals’ questions and concerns. Please know that we value your input as we attempt to make licensing processes and related matters as coherent and manageable as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions

By Dr. Paul West, LPC, NCC, Board Member

It has been over a decade since the licensing regulations were implemented for social workers, marriage and family therapists, and professional counselors in Pennsylvania. The promulgation of Chapters 47, 48, and 49 of Pennsylvania Law established regulations intended to not only meet the specific stipulations contained in the law but also reflect the intent of the legislature when the original bill was signed into law. Since the licensure regulations were first published in 2002, they have been amended several times based on emerging issues and the need to offer clarification to particular sections.

One of the functions of the licensing board has been to offer assistance to current and future licensees in understanding the licensing regulations. The continuous growth of licensed social workers,

clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, and professional counselors in Pennsylvania has resulted in the development of a section on the Board’s website (www.dos.state.pa.us/social) for “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ). While the Board remains available to address questions regarding the licensing requirements, the introduction of the FAQs provides individuals with more immediate information in many situations.

FAQs provide a wealth of information regarding the licensure process as well as clarifying some elements contained in the regulations that may be confusing. The FAQs provide further clarity of the licensing standards.

The FAQs do not replace the need for individuals to read and be familiar with the licensing regulations. However, when individuals have read particular regulations along with the cross-referenced regulations and still have questions, a visit to the FAQs section of the licensure board website may be in order and save valuable time.