Q&A on the “Supervised Clinical Experience” Requirement for Licensed Professional Counselors

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The State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors regulates the requirements for individuals who may appropriately use the title of licensed social worker, licensed clinical social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist, and/or licensed professional counselor. Many individuals desiring licensure and licensed professionals supporting emerging professionals striving for licensure, focus on the educational requirements and/or examination requirements. Details for these requirements are enumerated on the board’s Web site.

Another major requirement for licensure is the supervised clinical experience requirement. The following questions and answers focus on supervised clinical experience requirements for licensed professional counselors. Requirements for licensed social workers and marriage and family therapists are similar, but please consult their specific sections of the state licensure rules and regulations.

How much supervised counseling experience is required? Master’s degree licensee applicants must complete 3,600 hours of supervised clinical experience. Doctoral degree licensee applicants must complete 2,400 hours of supervised clinical experience.

Can the practicum and internship training I took during my educational requirements for licensure count? No, the supervised clinical experience must be obtained after the completion of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours of graduate coursework to meeting the educational requirements for licensure.

What type of clinical setting is appropriate for the supervised clinical experience requirement? Acceptable experience means supervised experiences in a setting that is organized to prepare you for the practice of counseling consistent with your education and training.

What type of clinical experiences do I need? Experience must meet the criteria established in Section 49.13(a)(4) and 49.13(b) of the regulations. It is appropriate to engage in a wide range of clinical experiences. However, at least half of the experience shall consist of providing services in one or more of the following areas: assessment, counseling, therapy, psychotherapy, other therapeutic interventions, consultation, family therapy or group therapy.

Can I use multiple work or training sites for my supervised clinical experience? Supervised work activity needs to take place in a single setting for (1) at least 30 hours per week but no more than 40 hours per week during at least a three-month period, or (2) at least 15 hours per week for at least six months.

Who can be my supervisor? A supervisor for supervised clinical experiences needs to meet one of the following requirements: (1) holds a license as a professional counselor and has five years experience within the last 10 years as a professional counselor, or (2) holds a license and has at least a master’s degree in a related field and has five years experience during the last 10 years. At least half (1,800 hours) of the supervised clinical experience needs to be supervised by a licensed professional counselor. No more than half (1,800 hours) can be provided by a licensed individual in a related field with appropriate experience.

Can my supervisor be licensed in any state? No, your supervisor must hold a current license in the state where you are pursuing your supervised clinical experience.

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How much supervision do I need? Supervisor and supervisee need to meet for a minimum of two hours for every 40 hours of supervised clinical experience.

Can I have some group supervision as well as individual supervision? At least one of the two hours for every 40 hours of supervised clinical experience needs to be individual supervision and in person, and one of the two hours may be with the supervisee in a group setting and in person.

How many supervisees can be in a supervision group? Because a supervisor shall supervise no more than six supervisees at the same time, it is assumed that a supervision group is no larger than six supervisees.

What is my supervisor supposed to do? The supervisor shall oversee, direct, recommend and instruct the professional counseling activities of the supervisee. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that acceptable supervised clinical experiences are occurring congruent with regulation 49.13(b). If the supervisor is temporarily unable to provide supervision, it is his/her responsibility to designate another supervisor as a substitute.

How do I document my supervised clinical experiences? During your supervision experiences, you may document your clinical experiences and supervision contact in an ongoing written format that works for you and your supervisor. At the conclusion of your supervised clinical experiences, refer to pages 4, 5, and 6 of the Application for a License by Examination to Practice Professional Counseling. Information required on this Verification of Supervised Clinical Experience form includes supervisor licensing and contact information, location and dates for supervised clinical experience, hours of supervised clinical experience, hours of individual and group supervision, and a supervisor’s written summary of supervised clinical experiences. Complete these pages for each supervised counseling experience you are using to meet the licensure requirement.

The new Web site, www.H1N1inPA.com, was created by the Department of Health to answer questions and provide the latest news on the virus. “We expect to see a steady rise in H1N1 flu cases in the coming months, so it is essential that Pennsylvanians have ready access to the latest important developments,” said Secretary of Health Everette James.

The Web site features an explanation of the novel H1N1 virus, frequently asked questions, symptoms of the disease, how to care for sick family members, downloadable educational flyers and posters, and links to other resources.

The site also outlines simple steps that all Pennsylvanians should take to reduce the risk of becoming ill or spreading the virus to others:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put the used tissue in the waste basket. If don’t have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve, but never into your hands or onto bare skin.
- Keep your hands away from your face and don’t touch your mouth, nose and eyes.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep clean frequently used surfaces such as knobs, countertops and desks.
- Stay home from work or school whenever you are sick, and remain home until you are fully recovered.

For more information, visit www.H1N1inPA.com or call the Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258).

New Web Site Helps Pennsylvanians Protect Against H1N1 Flu

Pennsylvanians now have a new online resource to help them learn about and help control the spread of the novel H1N1 flu virus.