

Clinical Supervision of Licensed Counselors

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CONCERN

Clinical Supervision Requirement

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- ▶ *The Clinical Mental Health Board (NDBCE) has three levels of licensure:*
 - ▶ Licensed Associate Professional Counselor (LAPC)
 - ❑ Must possess a Master's in Counseling degree
 - ❑ Must pass a National Counseling Exam (NCE)
 - ❑ Must provide a plan of supervision to the NDBCE
 - ▶ Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
 - ❑ Must have 2 years of counseling experience
 - ❑ Must receive a minimum of 100 hours of supervision by an LPC or LPCC counselor ONLY
 - ▶ Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC)
 - ❑ Must have 2 years of counseling experience
 - ❑ Complete additional coursework (60 credits total)
 - ❑ Must pass a Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination + videotape of counseling skills
 - ❑ Must receive a minim of 100 hours of supervision by an LPCC counselor only

CURRENT SUPERVISION MODEL

Individuals who graduate with a Master's in Counseling degree and pass a national test are immediately granted the **LAPC** license (provided they have secured a supervisor); no supervisor, no license.

LAPC licensees need to be supervised for 2 years (by a **LPC** or **LPCC** supervisor ONLY) in order to move to the next level and receive a **LPC** license.

IMPORTANT: No other affiliated mental health professional, including a doctoral level Counseling Psychologist, is allowed to supervise a master's level Counselor in the state of North Dakota.

After meeting additional academic and examination requirements, **LAPCs** are eligible for the final **LPCC** license. Only individuals with a **LPCC** licensure are reimbursable by virtually all 3rd party insurers.

SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

- ▶ Clinical Mental Health Counseling students often struggle to obtain supervision by an **LPC** or **LPCC** counselor because many agencies do not have an **LPC** or **LPCC** on staff, especially in rural areas, where mental health shortages are critical (e.g., Summit Counseling)
- ▶ An inability or difficulty in securing a supervisor causes recent counseling graduates tremendous stress.
- ▶ Some recent counseling graduates have declined or not applied for mental health positions due to being unable to obtain supervision by an **LPC** or **LPCC** supervisor.
- ▶ North Dakota is **only one of 13 states** who **REQUIRE** a professional counselor, pursuing licensure, to obtain supervision by a more advanced professional counselor or do not explicitly state supervisor requirements.
- ▶ The remaining states **ALLOW** affiliated licensed mental health professionals to provide supervision to novice counselors, seeking more advanced licensure. Potential supervisors include: Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Addiction Counselors, Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, etc.

University of Mary Statistics

April 2015 Graduates

- 2 out of 7 Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduates (*Bismarck campus*) are still looking for clinical counselor positions and appropriate supervision (by an LPCC counselor).
- 0 out of 4 Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduates (*Fargo Campus*) are looking for a clinical counselor position (all employed; unknown if they were able to secure LPCC supervision).

April 2016 Graduates

- 3 out of 6 Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduates (*Bismarck Campus*) are still looking for clinical counselor positions and appropriate supervision (by an LPCC counselor).
- 2 out of 5 Clinical Mental Health counseling graduates (*Fargo Campus*) are still looking for a clinical counselor position and appropriate supervision (by an LPCC counselor).
 - 1 out of the 5 who obtained a position works as a School Counselor, as she completed both School and Clinical Counseling degrees.

Current Options for LAPC Licensees

- ▶ Obtain a counseling position which provides supervision by an **LPC** or **LPCC** counselor (supervision is often free of charge)- **DIFFICULT FOR MANY**
- ▶ Obtain a counseling position at an agency which does not employ an **LPC** or **LPCC** supervisor. Secure supervision by a third party supervisor (face-to-face or web based). This supervision is often not free and could result in \$5000-\$10,000 in additional cost to counselors who are pursuing licensure.
- ▶ According to the NDBCE website, there are currently **83** registered counseling supervisors (**LPC** and **LPCC** combined) in the entire state of North Dakota.
 - ▶ **18** are **LPC** supervisors
 - ▶ **65** are **LPCC** supervisors

IMPORTANT: Most novice counselors seek a **LPCC supervisor ONLY because this shortens their licensure process by approximately 2 years.**

HOW COULD THIS ISSUE BE ADDRESSED?

- ▶ **PREFERRED SOLUTION:** NDBACE could change their rule to allow affiliated mental health professionals, who are registered as clinical supervisors by their respective boards, to provide supervision to LAPC counselors who are working toward a LPC or LPCC license.
 - ▶ This change would align North Dakota requirements to at least 37 other states.
- ▶ **TEMPORARY SOLUTION:** NDBACE could allow a supervision waiver, allowing LAPC licensees obtain supervision by an affiliated mental health professional, who is a registered supervisor by his/her respective board, to provide supervision in extenuating circumstances (e.g., agency has no LPC or LPCCs on staff).
 - ▶ Enforcement of this could be tricky- would these requests really be considered and approved?

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF REVISING THE NDBCE RULE

- ▶ More **LAPC** and **LPC** counselors would seek employment in agencies (including rural communities) who may provide supervision by an affiliated mental health professional.
- ▶ **LAPCs** would not need to pay for supervision, because they would have a greater amount of supervisors to choose from instead of being restricted to **LPC** and **LPCC** supervisors ONLY, who frequently charge between \$50-\$100/hour (or more) for this service.
- ▶ Avoid undue stress and hardship to recent counseling graduates who are having difficulty obtaining supervision from a board registered **LPC** or **LPCC** supervisor.