262 CMR 2.00: REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE AS A MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR

Section

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2.01: Preface

To qualify for licensure as a mental health counselor, pursuant to the requirements of M.G.L. c. 112, § 165, an applicant must provide evidence satisfactory to the Board that the education and clinical field experience requirements listed in 262 CMR 2.05 through 2.08 have been met by the applicant.

All Licensed Mental Health Counselors are charged with having knowledge of 262 CMR and are required to practice Mental Health Counseling in accordance with its provisions.

2.02: Definitions

Approved Supervisor. An individual who is at least one of the following:

(a) A Massachusetts Licensed Mental Health Counselor or Massachusetts licensed marriage and family therapist with:

1. three years of Full Time, or the equivalent Part Time, experience as a practicing Massachusetts Licensed Mental Health Counselor or licensed Massachusetts marriage and family therapist; or
2. an approved Clinical Supervisor certification from the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association (MaCCS), American Mental Health Counselors Association, American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, National Board for Certified Counselors, or a similar certificate approved by the board; or
3. twelve continuing education hours in supervision provided by Entity-approved Sponsors, as defined in 262 CMR 7.02: *Definitions*, that cover legal and ethical issues, theories, and recordkeeping in supervision;

(b) A Massachusetts licensed independent clinical social worker with three years of Full Time, or the equivalent Part Time, experience as a practicing licensed independent clinical social worker; or

(c) A Massachusetts licensed psychologist with health service provider certification; or

(d) A Massachusetts licensed physician with a sub-specialization in psychiatry; or

(e) A Massachusetts licensed nurse practitioner with a sub-specialization in psychiatry; or

(f) If a supervisee's training and supervision occur outside of Massachusetts, an Approved Supervisor is a licensed person who, as determined by the Board, has equivalent qualifications in that state to a licensed mental health practitioner in a category listed above.

Board. The Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions established under M.G.L. c. 13, § 88.

Board Examination. The National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination administered by the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc.

Clinical Field Experience Site. A site providing pre and post- Master's clinical field experience training that is a public or private Recognized Educational Institution or health or mental health institution regulated by the state, or other appropriate entity regulated by the state or otherwise exempt from regulation, that has integrated programs for the delivery of clinical Mental Health Counseling and has established provisions for appropriate supervision.

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Contact Hour. The unit of measurement of Direct Client Contact Experience of at least 45 minutes which may be composed of segments of at least 15 consecutive minutes.

Contract Supervisor. A Licensed Mental Health Counselor with three years of Full Time or the equivalent Part Time post-licensure clinical Mental Health Counseling experience who has a written agreement with the individual receiving supervision and the Clinical Field Experience Site where supervision is occurring regarding the supervision to be provided.

Direct Client Contact Experience. Direct, face-to-face, clinical Mental Health Counseling experience with a range of individuals, groups, couples, or families through Clinical Field Experience Sites that conforms to the Mental Health Counseling scope of practice as defined in 262 CMR 2.02: Mental Health Counseling. Such experience does not include vocational guidance services, academic school guidance counseling, industrial or organizational consulting services, teaching or conducting research.

Emergency Contact. In school settings where individuals are working as school adjustment counselors, the school principal, a guidance counselor or a licensed educational psychologist who serves as the contact in the temporary absence of an Approved Supervisor. In certain health care facilities where Mental Health Counseling is provided, a licensed rehabilitation counselor, a licensed psychologist, a psychiatric nurse practitioner or a designated clinical administrator who serves as the contact in the temporary absence of an Approved Supervisor.

Full Time. 35 hours per week, 48 weeks per year. The full time practice of clinical Mental Health Counseling must include at least ten Contact Hours per week of Direct Client Contact Experience.

Graduate Level Course. A course consisting of graduate level academic work. For required courses, a Graduate Level Course is a minimum of three semester credits or four quarter credits. For elective courses, a Graduate Level Course may be one or more semester/quarter credits.

Group Supervision. A regularly scheduled meeting of not more than ten mental health supervisees under the direction of an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor for a period of at least one Supervisory Contact Hour. "Peer" supervision groups do not constitute Group Supervision.

Individual Supervision. A meeting of one supervisee with an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor for at least one Supervisory Contact Hour.

Internship. A distinctly defined, post-*Practicum*, supervised curricular experience that totals a minimum of 600 clock hours. An internship enables the supervisee to enhance clinical Mental Health Counseling skills and integrate professional knowledge and skills appropriate to the supervisee's initial professional placement. An internship provides an opportunity for the individual to perform all the activities that a regularly employed staff member in the setting would be expected to perform.

Licensed Mental Health Counselor. A person licensed as a mental health counselor under M.G.L. c. 112, § 165.

Licensed Supervised Mental Health Counselor. A person licensed as a supervised mental health counselor under M.G.L. c. 112, § 165.

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Mental Health Counseling. The rendering of professional services to individuals, families or groups for compensation, monetary or otherwise. These professional services include: applying the principles, methods, and theories of counseling, human development, learning theory, group and family dynamics, the etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional behavior and psychotherapeutic techniques to define goals and develop a treatment plan of action aimed toward the prevention, treatment and resolution of mental and emotional dysfunction and intra or interpersonal disorders to all persons irrespective of diagnosis. The practice of Mental Health Counseling includes, but is not limited to, assessment, diagnosis and treatment, counseling and psychotherapy, of a nonmedical nature of mental and emotional disorders, psychoeducational techniques aimed at prevention of such disorders, and consultation to individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Post-Master's Degree Clinical Field Experience. Supervised work experience compliant with 262 CMR 2.07 and beginning after the candidate has earned all required education pursuant to 262 CMR 2.05.

Part Time. Experience gained in less than 35 hours per week for the purpose of meeting the post-graduate clinical field experience requirement.

Practicum. A distinctly defined, pre-Internship, supervised curricular experience that totals a minimum of 100 clock hours. A provides for the development of clinical Mental Health Counseling and group work skills under supervision. A may take place through the academic campus or through a Clinical Field Experience Site.

Recognized Educational Institution. An educational institution licensed or accredited by the state regional accrediting body in which it is located which meets regional standards for the granting of a Master's or Doctoral degree.

Relevant Field. Counseling, counselor education, expressive therapies, adjustment counseling, rehabilitation counseling, counseling psychology, clinical psychology, or another Mental Health Counseling field determined by the Board to be a Relevant Field.

Supervised Clinical Field Experience. Supervision compliant with 262 CMR 8.03(4) by an Approved Supervisor while in the practice of clinical Mental Health Counseling services.

Supervisory Contact Hour. The unit of measurement of Individual Supervision, Group Supervision, or Supervised Clinical Field Experience lasting a minimum of 45 consecutive minutes.

2.03: Licensure Application Requirements

(1) An applicant for licensure as a Licensed Supervised Mental Health Counselor must provide to the Board the following:

(a) a complete application for licensure as prescribed by the Board;

(b) a final transcript which demonstrates that the applicable degree and education requirements under 262 CMR 2.05 have been met;

(c) evidence which demonstrates that the applicant has completed the clinical field experience requirements under 262 CMR 2.06; and

(d) evidence of a passing score on the Board Examination. Passing scores remain valid for a period of five years from the date the examination was taken.

(2) An applicant for licensure as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor must provide to the Board the following:

(a) a complete application for licensure as prescribed by the Board;

(b) a final transcript that demonstrates the applicable degree and education requirements under 262 CMR 2.05 have been met;

(c) evidence that demonstrates the applicant has completed the clinical field experience requirements under 262 CMR 2.06 through 2.08; and

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(d) evidence of a passing score on the Board Examination. Passing scores will remain valid for a period of five years from the date the examination was taken unless the applicant was licensed as a Licensed Supervised Mental Health Counselor or as a mental health counselor, or the equivalent, by another state or jurisdiction after passing the Board Examination.

(e) If the applicant holds or held a license as a Licensed Supervised Mental Health Counselor, the applicant must provide only 262 CMR 2.03(2)(a) and (c).

(3) Any applicant who holds a license, certification or registration as a mental health counselor, or the equivalent thereof as determined by the Board, issued by another state or jurisdiction, may apply to the Board for licensure as a mental health counselor by reciprocal recognition. Such applicants must submit to the Board:

(a) a complete application for licensure as prescribed by the Board;

(b) a final transcript that demonstrates the applicable degree and education requirements under 262 CMR 2.05 have been met;

(c) evidence of a passing score on the Board Examination; and

(d) written proof, in a form acceptable to the Board, that the applicant's license, certification, or registration has been in good standing with the licensing authority that issued it for the three years preceding the date the applicant applied for licensure in Massachusetts.

2.05: Education and Degree Requirements

(1) Eligible applicants must have a minimum of 60 semester credit hours or 80 quarter credit hours (each semester credit equals 1.33 quarter credits) from an integrated, planned and comprehensive program from a Recognized Educational Institution, which degree/certificates includes a and Internship as defined in 262 CMR 2.02 and the Required Course Areas as defined by 262 CMR 2.05(2).

Eligible applicants must obtain the required education through the following degree programs:

(a) a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling or a Relevant Field of at least 60 semester credits (80 quarter credits);

(b) a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling or a Relevant Field of at least 48 semester credits (64 quarter credits) with completion of at least 12 semester credits (16 quarter credits) of additional qualifying courses listed in 262 CMR 2.05(2)(a) and (b); or

(c) a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling or a Relevant Field with a certificate of advanced graduate studies (CAGS); or

(d) two Master's degrees in Mental Health Counseling or a Relevant Field; or

(e) a Doctoral degree in Mental Health Counseling or a Relevant Field.

Eligible applicants who hold degrees listed in 262 CMR 2.05(1)(a) through (e), but are missing credits or required courses, may supplement their degree program by taking additional qualifying courses or credits listed in 262 CMR 2.05(2)(a) and (b). No applicant shall earn credit for any supervised experience that occurs prior to the applicant's completion of all education listed in 262 CMR 2.05.

(2) As components of the degrees and certificates listed in 262 CMR 2.05(1), candidates must meet the following requirements:

(a) Required Course Areas. The successful completion of a minimum of ten Graduate Level Courses in each of the ten content areas listed in 262 CMR 2.05(2)(a) and each course may be used to fill only one requirement. All courses must focus specifically on Mental Health Counseling. The ten content areas are as follows:

1. Counseling Theory. Examination of the major theories, principles and techniques of Mental Health Counseling and their application to professional counseling settings. Understanding and applying theoretical perspectives with clients.

2. Human Growth and Development. Understanding the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental stages of life. Understanding major theories of physical, cognitive, affective and social development and their application to Mental Health Counseling practice.

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3. Psychopathology. Identification and diagnosis and mental health treatment planning for abnormal, deviant, or psychopathological behavior, includes assessments and treatment procedures.

4. Social and Cultural Foundations. Theories of multicultural counseling, issues and trends of a multicultural and diverse society. Foundational knowledge and skills needed to provide Mental Health Counseling services to diverse populations in a culturally competent manner.

5. Clinical Skills. Understanding of the theoretical bases of the counseling processes, Mental Health Counseling techniques, and their therapeutic applications. Understanding and practice of counseling skills necessary for the mental health counselor.

6. Group Work. Theoretical and experiential understandings of group development, purpose, dynamics, group counseling methods and skills, as well as leadership styles. Understanding of the dynamics and processes of Mental Health (therapeutic, psychosocial, psycho-educational) groups.

7. Special Treatment Issues. Areas relevant to the practice of Mental Health Counseling, *i.e*. psychopharmacology, substance abuse, school or career issues, marriage and family treatment, sexuality and lifestyle choices, treating special populations.

8. Appraisal. Individual and group educational and psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal. Examination of the various instruments and methods of psychological appraisal and assessment including, but not limited to, cognitive, affective, and personality assessment utilized by the mental health counselor. The function of measurement and evaluation, purposes of testing, reliability and validity.

9. Research and Evaluation. Understanding social science research, evaluative methodologies and strategies, types of research, program evaluation, needs assessments, ethical and legal considerations.

10. Professional Orientation. Understanding of professional roles and functions of Mental Health Counselors, with particular emphasis on legal and ethical standards. Ethical case conceptualization, analysis and decision making as it relates to clinical practice. Knowledge and understanding of the standards set by the code of ethics of the American Counseling Association and the American Mental Health Counselors Association. Understanding of licensure and regulatory practices.

(b) Electives Areas. Graduate Level Courses other than required Graduate Level Courses must be elective Graduate Level Courses which include knowledge and skills in the practice of Mental Health Counseling. Appropriate Graduate Level Courses may include, but are not limited to, any of the content areas listed under 262 CMR 2.05(2)(a) as well as:

1. best practices for maintaining and terminating counseling and psychotherapy;
2. consultation skills;
3. outreach and prevention strategies;
4. diagnosis and treatment issues;
5. working with special populations;
6. professional identity and practice issues, including historical perspectives;
7. mental health regulations and policy;
8. management of community mental health programs.

(c) a ; and

(d) an Internship.

2.06: Pre-master's Degree Clinical Field Experience Requirements

(1) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of a pre-Master's degree *Practicum* that includes Supervised Clinical Field Experience and Direct Client Contact Experience. The *Practicum* must take place over a minimum period of at least seven weeks through an academic campus or through a Clinical Field Experience Site. The must include:

(a) 40 Contact Hours of Direct Client Contact Experience through Clinical Field Experience Sites conforming to the Mental Health Counseling scope of practice as defined under 262 CMR 2.02 or peer role plays and laboratory experience in individual, group, couple and family interactions;

(b) 25 Supervisory Contact Hours of supervision; of which:

1. a minimum of ten Supervisory Contact Hours must be Individual Supervision;

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2. a minimum of five Supervisory Contact Hours must be Group Supervision with no more than ten supervisees in a group;
3. the remaining ten Supervisory Contact Hours may be Individual or Group Supervision.

(2) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of a pre-Master's degree Internship which includes Supervised Clinical Field Experience and Direct Client Contact Experience. Where the Internship is conducted through the intern's place of employment, the Internship site must provide additional activities and supervision clearly delineated from the intern's usual work activities. The Internship must include:

(a) 240 Contact Hours of Direct Client Contact Experience through Clinical Field Experience Sites conforming to the Mental Health Counseling scope of practice defined under 262 CMR 2.02;

(b) 45 Supervisory Contact Hours of supervision; of which:

1. a minimum of 15 Supervisory Contact Hours must be Individual Supervision;
2. a minimum of 15 Supervisory Contact Hours must be Group Supervision, with no more than ten supervisees in a group;
3. the remaining 15 Supervisory Contact Hours may be either Individual Supervision or Group Supervision.

(3) and Internship supervisees in a Clinical Field Experience Site may see clients only when there is an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor available. In the temporary absence of either, a supervisee may see clients so long as an Emergency Contact is available.

(4) Supervisors must conduct regular evaluations of the *Practicum* and Internship supervisee's performance throughout the experience including a formal evaluation upon completion of the experience. Such evaluations shall include but not be limited to direct observation and review of process notes.

2.07: Post-master's Degree Clinical Field Experience Requirements

(1) Eligible applicants must complete, in no less than two and no more than eight years, a minimum of two years of Full Time or equivalent Part Time, post-Master's degree Supervised Clinical Field Experience and Direct Client Contact Experience. Post Master's Degree Supervised Clinical Field Experience and Direct Client Contact Experience may not begin until the applicant has completed 60 semester credits (80 quarter credits), including all requirements under 262 CMR 2.05.

(2) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of the following post-Master's experience requirements:

(a) 3,360 total hours; which includes:

(b) 960 Contact Hours of Direct Client Contact Experience, of which:

1. a minimum of 610 Direct Client Contact Experience Contact Hours are in individual, couples, or family counseling; and
2. a maximum of 350 Direct Client Contact Experience Contact Hours may be in group counseling.

(3) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of the following supervision hour requirements during post-Master's experience:

(a) at least 130 total hours of supervision of which at least 75 hours must be in Individual Supervision;

(b) a minimum of one Supervisory Contact Hour of supervision for every 16 Contact hours of Direct Client Contact Experience; and

(c) if working Part Time, supervision that is pro-rated no less than one Supervisory Contact Hour bi-weekly.

(4) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the following supervision conditions:

(a) the applicant must have a formal relationship with the Clinical Field Experience Site;

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(b) the supervisor must be a staff member of the Clinical Field Experience Site who is an Approved Supervisor or a Contract Supervisor so long as written notice of agreements with a contract supervisor are provided to and maintained on file by appropriate personnel at the Clinical Field Experience Site;
(c) annual evaluations of the supervisee must be completed by the Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor and reviewed and maintained on file by appropriate personnel at the site; and

(5) The provision of an Emergency Contact must be in place for all Clinical Field Experience Sites. The Emergency Contact individual shall not replace the requirement for an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor.

2.08: Supervision by Licensed Mental Health Counselors

A minimum of 75 Supervisory Contact Hours of the 200 total Supervisory Contact Hours of supervision required (pre- or post-Master's degree) must be supervision by an Approved Supervisor who is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor or an equivalently licensed mental health counselor from another state or jurisdiction.

2.09: Legally Protected Health Care Activity

No person shall be denied initial licensure or denied renewal due to any complaint, criminal charge, conviction, judgment, discipline, or other sanction due to the providing or assisting in providing reproductive health care services or gender-affirming health care services, as defined at M.G.L. c. 12, § 11*I½*, so long as the services provided would have been lawful in Massachusetts and are consistent with standards for good professional practice in Massachusetts

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

262 CMR: M.G.L. c. 112, §§ 163 through 172 and M.G.L. c. 13, §§ 88 through 90.