

**MEETING MINUTES
TENNESSEE BOARD FOR LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS,
MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPISTS, AND
CLINICAL PASTORAL THERAPISTS MINUTES**

DATE: October 28, 2019

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Health Related Boards Conference Center
Poplar Room, 665 Mainstream Drive
Nashville, TN 37243

**BOARD MEMBERS
PRESENT:** Susan Hammonds-White, Ed.D. LPC/MHSP, Chair
Kimberly Speakman, LPC/MHSP
Shelly Steel, MFT
Howard Nelson, CPT
Jennifer Little, Consumer member

STAFF PRESENT: Teddy Wilkins, Unit Director
Sharonda Thompson, Board Administrator 2
Doris VanOvermeiren, Board Administrator 1
Nathaniel Flinchbaugh, Advisory Attorney
LaTonya Shelton, ASA 3

Dr. Hammonds-White called the meeting to order at 9:11. A roll call was conducted and a quorum was present. Staff also introduced themselves.

Ms. Wilkins explained there will be no reports as this meeting as it is primarily to discuss rule amendments to the licensed professional counselor rules.

Discussion Concerning Acceptable Degrees for Professional Counselor Licensure Rules

Dr. Hammonds-White opened the discussion stating since the last meeting of September 19 when this topic was discussed and the decision was made to only allow degrees in “counseling” to qualify an applicant for licensure and not accept one having a degree in clinical psychology to be approved for licensure. She stated at the last meeting an applicant was allowed to withdraw her application since she had a degree in clinical psychology. Since then it has come to the Board’s attention there are several more applications where the clinical psychology degree was presented for licensure as a professional counselor. She further stated there is some history in Tennessee of allowing applicants with a clinical psychology degree be accepted for licensure as a professional counselor on a case by case basis. Dr. Hammonds-White continued stating this is a national discussion as different types of degrees are being accepted by other states allow various types of degrees to be accepted. She stated there is a large historical context for allowing other degree types as psychology and counseling have had somewhat of a conflict in the 1980’s and 1990’s over who could and could not be licensed in either profession and the psychology profession was not in favor of licensing professional counselors. The Board of Examiners in Psychology made a

decision to no longer license master's level graduates in Tennessee to be able to practice independently. They may be certified as a certified psychological assistant, but must always work under supervision. Dr. Hammonds-White stated this presents a dilemma because these graduates are highly qualified and have worked under supervision.

Mr. Flinchbaugh pointed out that the words "closely related field" in Tenn. Code Ann. 63-22-104 apply to the coursework taken and not the degree. There has been much confusion by the public and licensees on this matter. Mr. Flinchbaugh asked the board whether, in the board's opinion, other types of degrees (i.e.: clinical psychology) can count towards licensure as a professional counselor.

Ms. Wilkins spoke to the board stating she has received many letters and phone calls from individual stating they understood the "closely related field" language referred to the degree and not the coursework. She further stated that the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) [who administers the national tests for licensure] accepts psychology degrees for allowing someone to sit for the exams.

Ms. Speakman spoke about some educational institutions require the same coursework for either a professional counselor or educational counselor, and this degree should be considered as well.

Ms. Steel stated she felt as long as the required coursework met the qualifications for a professional counselor license and the practicum experience has been in counseling, the public was protected and she felt the board upheld their role. She further stated in the case of the art history degree that the coursework did not meet the standards required in some cases.

Dr. Robin Lee from MTSU addressed the board asking how accepting these degrees at the present time would impact the board's desire to require only CACREP degrees by 2025.

Dr. Peter Wilson addressed the board stating he is aware that in the past the board has licensed individuals with various degrees, stating that he feels each applicant should have their file reviewed closely for the coursework, practicum completed, and professional identity.

Dr. Hammonds-White stated she has much concern for applicants in these situations and that the board is in an unfolding, moving, process. She further stated if the board is able to move forward with the CACREP program in 2025 many issues will be solved.

Mr. Flinchbaugh opined that there may still be issues even if CACREP is phased in for 2025 as this will ensure a degree is in counseling. He asked the board to state whether or not certain degrees would be considered to be a degree in counseling. Dr. Nelson questioned whether or not the statute had the last say. Mr. Flinchbaugh stated the statute overrides the rules. Mr. Flinchbaugh requested the board to determine whether a clinical psychology degree meeting the licensure requirements (may require additional coursework) or an art therapy degree with additional courses would meet the qualification.

Ms. Speakman requested Dr. Lee to explain the educational counseling program given at Middle Tennessee State University and how it might fit into the professional counseling degree. Dr. Lee responded many of the courses for either license are the same. The educational counseling degree is CACREP approved. Dr. Lee stated she hoped in the future the board might consider an

educational counseling degree as acceptable for a professional counseling license. Further discussion by board members and Dr. Lee ensued. Ms. Speakman stated the school counselor degree is something that needs to be on the board's radar for the future.

Mr. Flinchbaugh addressed the board stating the board should be careful in their wording when approving files with degrees other than "counseling" and cautioned the board not to use professional identity too strongly when reviewing files. He stated the board must stay within the statute but they could determine how it is to be interpreted.

Dr. Lee addressed the board again, stating that the problem with degrees is not actually this board's problem, but that it is the Board of Examiners in Psychology's problem since they chose not to license individuals at the master's level and this leaves these people without an option for independent practice.

Dr. Hammonds-White stated the board needs to state what a degree in "counseling" actually is. She stated she felt it should be a degree from a CACREP approved program, but not all CACREP programs. Ms. Wilkins stated some older CACREP programs only consisted of forty-eight (48) hours of coursework and the more current ones are sixty (60) hours. If someone applies with a forty-eight hour degree they must earn twelve (12) additional hours.

Dr. Bagwell from Belmont addressed the board and stated he felt evaluation should be based on the content of the curriculum. Mr. Flinchbaugh reminded the statute requires sixty (60) hours of coursework in counseling or a related field with a degree in counseling, as well as other requirements. He again reiterated would the board consider a degree in clinical psychology to be a degree in counseling. He again stated the national exam accepts this type of degree when a person applies for the exam. Further, other states accept many degrees for licensure. This board accepts supervisors with other types of degrees. These are factors the board must look at. The board cannot be arbitrary and capricious in its application decisions. For example, all coursework requirements must be met, all required exams have been passed, all supervision has been completed satisfactorily, would be completed in the application. These requirements are in the statute. It is up to the board to provide the parameters for approval. Ms. Steel stated applications would have to be decided on a case to case basis and justify the decision. Ms. Speakman stated even on the coursework summary sheet it is sometimes difficult to determine whether or not a course meets the requirement. For example in the art therapy applications it was felt the coursework was too narrowly based on art therapy to be used as a general counseling course and the applicant was asked to take more courses. Ms. Speakman expressed that it might be a good idea to add instructions to the coursework summary so students have a better idea of what the board is looking for in its coursework. Ms. Wilkins stated to the board that applications are received from individuals with a marital and family therapy degree wishing to become professional counselors and that Ridgmont University in Chattanooga uses the same courses for professional counselor and marital and family therapy, with the marital and family degree having additional coursework. Ms. Wilkins stated to the board that neither profession requires a temporary license, and frequently someone presents a complete application including proper supervision, but has a degree other than counseling and this is problematic. They have spent a lot of money to get supervision and take the exams and file an application and then they are told they don't qualify for a license.

Ms. Speakman presented language as a proposal to help the board with decision making on

applications:

“a mental health/counseling related degree will be considered for licensure as a LPC/MHSP when qualifying coursework has been met as outlined in 0450-01-.04(4). Ms. Wilkins asked whether this would apply to applications who request only LPC licensure for reasons such as failure of the advanced exam or for employment reasons. Mr. Flinchbaugh stated these parameters would be used to review files presented today. Ms. Speakman presented this statement as a motion, seconded by Dr. Nelson. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Dr. Hammonds-White asked if the board was ready to proceed with the application review. Ms. Wilkins asked the board if they would be willing to take up the correspondence first since some were being presented for a second time with further information.

Correspondence/Application Review

Application of Leslie Hurd

It was noted Dr. Peter Wilson wrote a letter in support of Leslie Hurd, so the board took up the application of Ms. Hurd. (Ms. Hurd has a degree in clinical psychology. All requirements for LPC/MHSP licensure have been met.) Ms. Speakman stated that based on what was just discussed and approved as criteria for approval she felt Ms. Hurd met the qualifications for licensure as a LPC/MHSP. Ms. Steel make the motion to approve Ms. Hurd for licensure seconded by Ms. Speakman. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Application of Megan Edenfield

Ms. Edenfield’s application was reviewed and discussed next. It is being presented a second time. After the first review, the board voted to allow Ms. Edenfield to withdraw her application, however she did not do so. (Ms. Edenfield has a clinical psychology degree with a concentration as a practitioner. She also has an additional twelve (12) course hours specifically in counseling. She has passed the NCE and jurisprudence, but not the NCMHCE and presented proper supervision. She does not wish to have MHSP designation.) Ms. Speakman stated when she reviewed the application the first time she felt all requirements for licensure had been met except for the degree. Dr. Hammonds-White asked the board if anyone would like to motion to rescind the motion to allow Ms. Edenfield to withdraw her application and to approve her application for LPC. Ms. Speakman made the motion seconded by Ms. Steel. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Letter from Lauren Fugate

Discussion was held concerning Ms. Fugate’s letter stating she is concerned about two supervisee’s she has. (One was Ms. Edenfield whose license was approved.) Ms. Fugate questioned what was she to tell her supervisee who has a degree in forensic psychology about the possibility of achieving licensure. The board asked Ms. Wilkins to obtain more information about this situation.

Application of Allison Basham

Ms. Basham has a degree in marriage and family therapy with sixty-six (66) hours. She is

applying for LPC only. (She has passed the NCE and jurisprudence and has proper supervision for LPC.) She is licensed as an associate counselor in Arkansas as well as an associate marital and family therapist. After reviewing the coursework summary sheet, the board asked for a syllabi on psychopharmacology, theoretical foundations, and general systems models. Ms. Speakman questioned why Ms. Basham was seeking licensure as a professional counselor rather than a marital and family therapist. Ms. Steel stated she felt Ms. Basham was closer to qualifying as a professional counselor rather than a marital and family therapist based upon her coursework. Ms. Speakman questioned whether this was acceptable to the board. Ms. Steel stated she did not feel the board had the right to determine which license one must apply for and requested the board staff gather further information.

Application of James Chappel

The board reviewed the application of James Chappel. (His degree is in clinical psychology. He has passed all exams and has proper supervision.) The board requested syllabi for ethics, psychopharmacology, treatment and treatment planning, use of the DSM. Ms. Speakman had questions about the practicum he had. The staff will bring the requested information back.

Application of Syidah Abdulla

The board reviewed the application of Ms. Abdulla. Ms. Wilkins stated the problem with this application is with the supervision hours and the fact that some were earned as far back as 2003-2006. Others are more recent. She was supervised by a psychologist. Ms. Speakman stated the 2003-2006 exceed the allowed timeframe as do those from 2007 - 2007. The only hours that may be considered are those from 2015-2019, but those are a “rolling clock” and some of the older hours may roll off. She might have to request a hardship letter to request another year to obtain hours. Ms. Speakman syllabi for theories of human development, abnormal behavior, ethics for professional, assessment in marriage and family therapy, and treatment and treatment planning. It was requested she re-write the worksheet and reach out to one of the universities in Memphis for guidance.

Application of Tracy DeSoto

Ms. DeSoto is licensed in California and is seeking LMFT licensure in Tennessee. When she was licensed the AAMFT exam was not required in California as they took a state exam. Mr. Flinchbaugh stated that Rule -0450-02-.(3) states the requirements for reciprocity from another. Ms. Steel stated she felt the California exam fulfilled the requirements for the national exam. Ms. Steel motioned that the board allow Ms. DeSoto to proceed with licensure if she successfully completes the Tennessee Jurisprudence exam, seconded by Dr. Nelson. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Discussion of Amendments to LPC Rules

The board discussed amendments to the licensed professional counselor rules including a supervisory agreement beginning in/around 2022. Discussion was also held concerning changing the supervision provision to require all supervision be by a licensed professional counselor with mental health service provider designation instead of allowing other professions to supervise. A date for this has not been set but it will occur in the future in a couple of years; most likely 2022.

Mr. Flinchbaugh will draft a policy to this effect to alert future licensees. Discussion was held concerning the practicum experience. Dr. Peter Wilson addressed the board stating this topic is confusing and suggested changes. Use of the temporary license was discussed. Changes to licensure by reciprocity were discussed to make it less cumbersome to apply by reciprocity. Mr. Flinchbaugh will draft a policy on reciprocity until the rules are in place. Many changes and amendments throughout the chapter were presented and discussed by the board. After the conclusion of the discussion, the board voted unanimously to approve the proposed amendments and send the rules to rulemaking. The draft rules for Licensed Professional Counselors will be sent by Mr. Flinchbaugh for internal review and ultimately a rulemaking hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled meeting of the board.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Speakman seconded by Ms. Steel. All voted in favor and the motion carried. Meeting was adjourned.

Ratified by the Board for Licensed Professional Counselors, Marital and Family Therapists, and Clinical Pastoral Therapists on January 3, 2020.