

## VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

*An Act to amend and reenact §§ 54.1-3500, 54.1-3505, and 54.1-3506 of the Code of Virginia, relating to licensure of professional counselors.*

[H 1666]

Approved

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 54.1-3500, 54.1-3505, and 54.1-3506 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 54.1-3500. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Appraisal activities" means the exercise of professional judgment based on observations and objective assessments of a client's behavior to evaluate current functioning, diagnose, and select appropriate treatment required to remediate identified problems or to make appropriate referrals.

"Board" means the Board of Counseling.

"Certified substance abuse counseling assistant" means a person certified by the Board to practice in accordance with the provisions of § 54.1-3507.2.

"Certified substance abuse counselor" means a person certified by the Board to practice in accordance with the provisions of § 54.1-3507.1.

"Counseling" means the ~~therapeutic process of~~ *application of principles, standards, and methods of the counseling profession* in (i) conducting assessments and diagnoses for the purpose of establishing treatment goals and objectives and (ii) planning, implementing, and evaluating treatment plans using treatment interventions to facilitate human development and to identify and remediate mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses ~~which~~ *that* interfere with mental health.

~~"Counseling treatment intervention" means those cognitive, affective, behavioral and systemic counseling strategies, techniques and methods common to the behavioral sciences that are specifically implemented in the context of a therapeutic relationship. Other treatment interventions include developmental counseling, guidance, and consulting to facilitate normal growth and development, including educational and career development.~~

"Licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner" means a person who: (i) is trained in and engages in the practice of substance abuse treatment with individuals or groups of individuals suffering from the effects of substance abuse or dependence, and in the prevention of substance abuse or dependence; and (ii) is licensed to provide advanced substance abuse treatment and independent, direct, and unsupervised treatment to such individuals or groups of individuals, and to plan, evaluate, supervise, and direct substance abuse treatment provided by others.

"Marriage and family therapist" means a person trained in the assessment and treatment of cognitive, affective, or behavioral mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems through the application of therapeutic and family systems theories and techniques.

"Marriage and family therapy" means the assessment and treatment of cognitive, affective, or behavioral mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems through the application of therapeutic and family systems theories and techniques and delivery of services to individuals, couples, and families, singularly or in groups, for the purpose of treating such disorders.

"Practice of counseling" means rendering or offering to render to individuals, groups, organizations, or the general public any service involving the application of principles, *standards, and methods of* ~~procedures~~ of the counseling profession, which shall include appraisal, counseling, and referral activities.

"Practice of marriage and family therapy" means the assessment and treatment of cognitive, affective, or behavioral mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems through the application of therapeutic and family systems theories and techniques, which shall include assessment, treatment, and referral activities.

"Practice of substance abuse treatment" means rendering or offering to render substance abuse treatment to individuals, groups, organizations, or the general public.

"Professional counselor" means a person trained in *the application of principles, standards, and methods of the counseling profession, including* counseling interventions designed to facilitate an individual's achievement of human development goals and remediating mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses ~~which~~ *that* interfere with mental health and development.

"Referral activities" means the evaluation of data to identify problems and to determine advisability of referral to other specialists.

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*"Residency" means a post-internship supervised clinical experience registered with the Board.*

*"Resident" means an individual who has submitted a supervisory contract to the Board and has received Board approval to provide clinical services in professional counseling under supervision.*

*"Substance abuse" and "substance dependence" mean a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.*

*"Substance abuse treatment" means (i) the application of specific knowledge, skills, substance abuse treatment theory, and substance abuse treatment techniques to define goals and develop a treatment plan of action regarding substance abuse or dependence prevention, education, or treatment in the substance abuse or dependence recovery process and (ii) referrals to medical, social services, psychological, psychiatric, or legal resources when such referrals are indicated.*

*"Supervision" means the ongoing process, performed by a supervisor, of monitoring the performance of the person supervised and providing regular, documented individual or group consultation, guidance, and instruction with respect to the clinical skills and competencies of the person supervised.*

**§ 54.1-3505. Specific powers and duties of the Board.**

In addition to the powers granted in § 54.1-2400, the Board shall have the following specific powers and duties:

1. To cooperate with and maintain a close liaison with other professional boards and the community to ensure that regulatory systems stay abreast of community and professional needs.

2. To conduct inspections to ensure that licensees conduct their practices in a competent manner and in conformance with the relevant regulations.

3. To designate specialties within the profession.

4. To administer the certification of rehabilitation providers pursuant to Article 2 (§ 54.1-3510 et seq.) of this chapter, including prescribing fees for application processing, examinations, certification and certification renewal.

5. [Expired.]

6. To promulgate regulations for the qualifications, education, and experience for licensure of marriage and family therapists. The requirements for clinical membership in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and the professional examination service's national marriage and family therapy examination may be considered by the Board in the promulgation of these regulations. The educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for marriage and family therapists shall not be less than the educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for professional counselors.

7. To promulgate, subject to the requirements of Article 1.1 (§ 54.1-3507 et seq.) of this chapter, regulations for the qualifications, education, and experience for licensure of licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners and certification of certified substance abuse counselors and certified substance abuse counseling assistants. The requirements for membership in NAADAC: the Association for Addiction Professionals and its national examination may be considered by the Board in the promulgation of these regulations. The Board also may provide for the consideration and use of the accreditation and examination services offered by the Substance Abuse Certification Alliance of Virginia. The educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners shall not be less than the educational credit hour, clinical experience hour, and clinical supervision hour requirements for licensed professional counselors. Such regulations also shall establish standards and protocols for the clinical supervision of certified substance abuse counselors and the supervision or direction of certified substance abuse counseling assistants, and reasonable access to the persons providing that supervision or direction in settings other than a licensed facility.

8. To maintain a registry of persons who meet the requirements for supervision of residents. The Board shall make the registry of approved supervisors available to persons seeking residence status.

**§ 54.1-3506. License required.**

In order to engage in the practice of counseling or marriage and family therapy or in the independent practice of substance abuse treatment, as defined in this chapter, it shall be necessary to hold a license; however, no license shall be required for the practice of marriage and family therapy or the independent practice of substance abuse treatment until six months after the effective date of regulations governing marriage and family therapy and substance abuse treatment, respectively, promulgated by the Board under subdivisions 6 and 7 of § 54.1-3505 issued by the Board.

The Board may issue a license, without examination, for the practice of marriage and family therapy or the independent practice of substance abuse treatment to persons who hold a current and unrestricted license as a professional counselor within the Commonwealth and who meet the clinical and academic requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist or licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner, respectively. The applicant for such license shall present satisfactory evidence of qualifications equal to those required of applicants for licensure as marriage and family therapists or

118 licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners, respectively, by examination in the Commonwealth.  
119 Any person who renders substance abuse treatment services as defined in this chapter and who is not  
120 licensed to do so, other than a person who is exempt pursuant to § 54.1-3501, shall render such services  
121 only when he is (i) under the supervision and direction of a person licensed under this chapter who shall  
122 be responsible for the services performed by such unlicensed person, or (ii) in compliance with the  
123 regulations governing an organization or a facility licensed by the Department of Behavioral Health and  
124 Developmental Services.

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