

Issue: Geriatric Mental Health Requirements for LCSW/MFT/LPCC

Currently the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) does not mandate a separate geriatric mental health course as a requirement for LCSW/MFT/ LPCC applicants/licensees. The topic is included under Aging and Long Term Care, but is not sufficient for competent practice with older adults.

The BBS is responsible for the regulation of Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT); Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW); Licensed Educational Psychologists (LEP); Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCC); MFT Interns (IMF); Associate Clinical Social Workers (ASW); and Professional Clinical Counselor Interns (PCCI) in the State of California.

MFT, LCSW, LPCC

In addition to holding a qualifying degree, an applicant for examination eligibility must complete specific pre-licensure required courses prior to submitting an application for MFT examination eligibility. These courses include:

- Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting (7 hrs)
- Human Sexuality (10 hrs)
- Alcoholism and Chemical Substance Abuse Dependency (15 hr/1 semester unit; must be within the qualifying degree program)
- Spousal/Partner Abuse (must be within degree program; must be 15 hours for those after 1/1/2004)
- Psychological Testing (2 semester or 3 quarter units)
- Psychopharmacology (2 semester or 3 quarter units)
- California Law and Professional Ethics (2 semester or 3 quarter units)
- Aging and Long Term Care (10 hrs for those after 1/1/04)

Note: The dates above refer to when a person begins his or her degree program.
Statutes and Regulations cited: B&P Code 4980.39, 4980.41; CCR Section 1807, 1807.2, 1810

MFT & LCSW Continuing Education and License Renewal

MFTs and LCSWs must complete 36 hours of continuing education within the preceding two years of their license renewal date. Licensees renewing for the first time only need to complete a minimum of 18 hours of continuing education by the expiration date of the license.

“Aging and Long –Term Care Requirement”

All licensees are required to complete a three-hour continuing education course in aging and long-term care. The course could include, but is not limited to, the biological, social, and psychological aspects of aging.

Additional Coursework pursuant to BPC 4999.32(e) includes courses in substance abuse, human sexuality, psychopharmacology, partner abuse, child abuse long term care, crisis counseling, and California law and ethics.

BPC 4980.39 Effective On or after January 1, 2012:

Requires applicants for licensure to complete coursework that includes instruction on the assessment and reporting, as well as treatment for, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect.

Next Steps?

- Define the desired outcome
- Determine strategic partners and explore possibilities for collaboration
- Research current geriatric mental health training programs
- Develop recommendations for geriatric mental health curriculum
- Explore possibility of a geriatric certificate:
 - NASW Professional Social Work Credentials and Advanced Practice Specialty Credentials <https://www.socialworkers.org/credentials/list.asp>
 - Boston University Institute of Geriatric Social Work-Online Certificate Programs (Mental Health and Aging Certificate) <http://www.bu.edu/igsw/online-training-programs/certificate-programs/>

Potential Partners:

- Shirley Krohn California Senior Legislature and Michael Gardner California Mental Health Planning Council
 - Shirley is collaborating with three CSU Schools of Social Work to recruit MSW student interns through an intergenerational co-learning project which provides the students with a real life opportunity to research gerontology policy issues affecting the aging population.
 - Currently recruiting graduate social work interns to develop a white paper proposal with examples of specific geriatric/gerontology mental health questions proposed for addition to the LCSW licensing examinations.
 - Selected students will be responsible for interviewing key stakeholders, and research and development of the proposed examination questions. Expected Completion date is by the end of April 2012.
 - Shirley is interested exploring the possibility of collaborating with the OASOC to bring legislation to expand the BBS licensee requirement for geriatric mental health coursework.
- GSWEC Geriatric Social Work Education Consortium GSWEC aims to strengthen geriatric social work education and increase social workers' competency in the field of aging.