

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

DESCRIPTION

Qualified school mental health staff have completed accredited graduate training programs and are licensed in a mental health profession, or actively pursuing licensure. Staff must also have appropriate supervision and receive ongoing [professional development](#).

RATIONALE

It is essential for school mental health providers to have completed accredited graduate training and possess licensure in their field. Standards in the field evolve quickly and it is important that school mental health staff remain current on issues of practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations offer guidelines to schools, collaborating community agencies, and school mental health providers on recruiting and hiring qualified school mental health providers. Resources at the end of the page offer further field-specific information on licensure.

Graduate Training/Hiring

1. Recruit school mental health staff with graduate degrees from accredited graduate programs. The master's degree is the preferred entry level credential for provision of services in schools. Graduate degrees that lead to professional work in the field of mental health include:
 - Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology
 - Psy.D. (Doctorate in Psychology)
 - M.S.W. (Master's Degree in Social Work)
 - M.A., or Ph.D. in Counseling
 - M.D. in Psychiatry
2. Recruit carefully by:
 - Posting positions for alumni of accredited graduate training programs
 - Assuring that the graduate training program is accredited
 - Verifying qualified degrees
 - Assessing transcripts for coursework related to school mental health
3. Hire mental health providers with demonstrated knowledge and experience in the areas of:
 - Child and adolescent development
 - School systems
 - Service provision
 - Evidence-based practice
 - Applicable state and federal regulations
 - Diverse populations, including people with disabilities

Licensure

1. Support staff in obtaining appropriate state licensure, if not already licensed.
2. Understand the variations that exist within the professional field of mental health.

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The following professions exist under the umbrella of mental health providers:

- Clinical Social Workers
- Mental Health Counselors
- Marriage and Family Therapists
- Psychiatrists
- Educational Psychologists
- Counseling Psychologists
- Clinical Psychologists

Note that all but four states require a doctoral degree to practice psychology. Jurisdictions recognize the degrees of doctor of philosophy (PhD), doctor of psychology (PsyD), and doctor of education (EdD) for licensure. Alaska, Oregon, Vermont, and West Virginia license master's-level clinicians to practice independently.

3. Be aware of the differences between licensure and certification within each discipline represented at your site and ensure that all school mental health staff meets mandatory state licensure standards, regardless of supplementary credentialing. *Examples of credentials include:*

- National Certified School Counselor credential (NCSC)
- Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC) credential
- Certified School Social Work Specialist (C-SSWS)
- Certified Advanced Children, Youth, and Family Social Worker (C-ACYFSW)
- Certified Family Therapist (CFT) credential

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Report of the Commission on Education and Training Leading to Licensure in Psychology*. Washington, DC: Author.

Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards. (2000). *Handbook of licensing and certification requirements for psychologists in the U.S. and Canada*. Montgomery, AL: Author.

Counts, W., De Vaney-Olvey, C., & Hogg, A. (2002). Licensure Requirements: Have We Raised the Bar Too Far? *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. 33, No. 3, 323–329. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/earlycareer/pdf/5LicRequirements.pdf>

RESOURCES

http://www.nbcc.org/art_licensurevscert

National Board for Certified Counselors page differentiating between State Licensure and National Certification

<http://www.nbcc.org/stateboardmap>

State licensure board listings

<http://www.asppb.org/HandbookPublic/before.aspx>

The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards Handbook on Licensing and Certification Requirements

Licensing Boards

Clinical Social Workers

ASWB

http://www.aswb.org/lic_req.shtml

Mental Health Counselors

<http://www.counseling.org/Counselors/LicensureAndCert/TP/StateRequirements/CT2.aspx>

Marriage and Family Therapists

Board of Regulation of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professionals

http://www.aamft.org/resources/Online_Directories/boardcontacts.asp

Directory of MFT Licensure and Certification Boards

Psychologists (Counseling Psychologists/ Clinical Psychologists/Educational Psychologists)

ASPPB, Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards

<http://www.asppb.org/about/boardContactStatic.aspx>

Psychiatrists

State Medical Boards

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2645.html>

National Credentialing Boards

National Board for Certified Counselors offers the Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) credential and three advanced credentials:

a) The National Certified School Counselor (NCSC)

b) The Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC) Credential

c) The Master Addictions Counselor (MAC) Credential.

<http://www.nbcc.org/>

Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification offers the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential

<http://www.crccertification.com/>

The **National Credentialing Academy** offers the Certified Family Therapist (CFT) credential, specific to marriage and family therapists.

<http://www.natlacad.4t.com/>

National Association of Social Work offers three credentials and seven specialty certifications including a Certified School Social Work Specialist (C-SSWS) and a Certified Advanced Children, Youth, and Family Social Worker (C-ACYFSW).

<http://www.socialworkers.org/credentials/default.asp>