



North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors

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NCBLPC Professional Brief

Content Area: Supervised Professional Practice - LPCA

Brief Overview/Description:

A Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LPCA) has a restricted license to practice counseling, meaning that they must practice counseling under the supervision of a supervisor approved by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors (Board). A Board approved, *active* supervision contract for the supervisor must be on file for an LPCA to practice counseling under that supervisor's supervision. No counseling can be done until the supervision contract is approved by the Board. An LPCA must gain and document 3,000 hours of supervised professional practice if he or she wishes to apply for the unrestricted Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) license.

An LPCA must receive one hour of clinical supervision for every 40 hours of counseling work. If the LPCA works 40 hours since his or her last supervision session and has not yet met with the approved clinical supervisor, the LPCA must stop work until he or she has met with the approved supervisor. The LPCA cannot meet with the clinical supervisor for 2 hours and then work 80 hours before the next supervision session. Clinical supervision must be face to face. "Face-to-face clinical supervision means supervision that is live, interactive, and visual. Video supervision is permitted as long as the session is synchronous (real time) and involves verbal and visual interaction during the supervision" (21 NCAC 53 .0212).

"At least three-quarters of the hours of clinical supervision shall be individual" supervision (21 NCAC 53 .0208) and "consists of face-to-face supervision of one or two supervisees with a qualified clinical supervisor at a rate of not less than one hour of clinical supervision per 40 hours of supervised professional practice" (21 NCAC 53 .0210). In other words, individual supervision may consist of individual (one supervisee and one supervisor) or triadic (two supervisees and one supervisor). "Group clinical supervision consists of face-to-face scheduled supervision between groups of supervisees, not to exceed 12 supervisees per group, and a qualified clinical supervisor for a period of not less than one and one half hours of clinical supervision" (21 NCAC 53 .0211). It is important to not the group supervision must be scheduled, consist of no more than 12 supervisees and last at least one hour and a half to count as group supervision.

Resources:

NC General Statutes Article 24: Licensed Professional Counselors Act; CHAPTER 53 - BOARD OF LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS; www.ncblpc.org

Key Legal Factors:

Every clinical supervision session must include "raw data from clinical work which is made available to the supervisor through such means as direct (live) observation, co-therapy, audio and video recordings, and live supervision. Written materials and self-reports by the supervised counselor may supplement the supervision process but shall not be the sole basis of any supervision session" (21 NCAC 53 .0208). Co-therapy involves both the supervisee and the approved supervisor providing counseling to the client(s), family, or group. Live supervision means the supervisor sits in with supervisee and the client(s) during a counseling session where he supervisee provided therapy (supervisor does not assist).

Supervision must take place for one hour for every 40 hours of counseling work done. That does not mean for every 40 hours of direct counseling, but every 40 hours overall of both indirect and direct counseling work.

The information contained herein is an overview of North Carolina laws, federal laws, and regulations. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all laws or regulations that govern the practice of counseling. The material is not to be taken as legal advice. Any interpretation of a statute or regulation expressed in the materials is created for educational purposes only. The NCBLPC does not issue advisory opinions, and the materials are not to be construed as such.

If a change in supervisors must occur, the LPCA must notify the Board and a new, active supervision contract must be on file for the new supervisor before supervision begins with the new supervisor. If supervision ceases from an approved supervisor for whom an active contract is on file with the Board, the LPCA and LPCS must notify the Board and the LPCA may not provide counseling services until a new supervisor and a new active supervision contract has received Board approval.

The title LPCA may not be used until Board documentation of the license is received. Furthermore, a supervisee cannot apply to become an LPCA until he or she has an official transcript showing he or she has graduated from a master's program. Please note that many colleges and universities have a period of time between the end of classes and graduation which means there will likely be a period of time that a person is finished with his or her program but not yet officially graduated. An applicant for LPCA may not provide counseling services even under supervision until he or she has applied and received notice from the Board that the restricted license has been issued.

Real Issues to Consider:

Because a person may not practice counseling as an LPCA without an approved and active supervision contract on file with the Board, it would be wise to consider this when negotiating employment start dates and terms.

Be mindful of when supervision sessions occur so that the supervisee does not work more than 40 hours without a supervision session. The supervisee must stop work if he or she has not had a supervision session in the last 40 hours of work. A supervisee may not work beyond 40 hours without having group or individual supervision.

The supervisor should submit the Supervision Reports on a quarterly basis. It is good practice for both the supervisee and the supervisor to maintain copies for the supervision reports.

Catch 22:

It is a good idea to have an approved back-up supervisor approved with the Board in case the supervisor goes out of town, has an emergency, has to miss a supervision session or cannot schedule a supervision session. After 40 hours of work, supervisee may not see clients or provide other counseling-related activities that are considered indirect hours until supervision can occur. Phone supervision does not meet the standards of supervision set forth in the law; however, you can have a distance supervision session if it involves an audio-visual component because supervision must be face to face.

Summary Statement:

Supervised professional counseling experience/practice is gained as a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LPCA), which is a restricted license to practice counseling. Because of this restricted license, professional counseling experience must be under the supervision of a supervisor approved by the Board. An LPCA may begin earning hours towards the LPC once he or she receives official documentation from the Board that the restricted license has been issued and the LPCA has an active supervision contract on file with the Board.