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STATE OF NEBRASKA

STATUTES RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE ACT

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Mission.
DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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38-3101. Act, how cited. Sections 38-3101 to 38-3132 shall be known and may be cited as the Psychology Practice Act.

38-3102. Definitions, where found. For purposes of the Psychology Practice Act and elsewhere in the Uniform Credentialing Act, unless the context otherwise requires, the definitions found in sections 38-3103 to 38-3110 apply.

38-3103. Board, defined. Board means the Board of Psychology.

38-3104. Client or patient, defined. Client or patient means a recipient of psychological services within the context of a professional relationship. In the case of individuals with legal guardians, including minors and incompetent adults, the legal guardian shall also be considered a client or patient for decisionmaking purposes.

38-3105. Code of conduct, defined. Code of conduct means that set of regulatory rules of professional conduct which has been adopted by the board to protect the public welfare by providing rules that govern a professional's behavior in the professional relationship.

38-3106. Institution of higher education, defined. Institution of higher education means a university, professional school, or other institution of higher learning that:
(1) In the United States, is regionally accredited by a regional or professional accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education;
(2) In Canada, holds a membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada; or
(3) In other countries, is accredited by the respective official organization having such authority.

38-3107. Mental and emotional disorder, defined. Mental and emotional disorder means a clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in a person and is associated with present distress or disability or with significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom. Such disorders may take many forms and have varying causes but must be considered a manifestation of behavioral, psychological, or biological dysfunction in the person. Reasonable descriptions of the kinds and degrees of mental and emotional disorders may be found in the revisions of accepted nosologies such as the International Classification of Diseases and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

38-3108. Practice of psychology, defined. (1) Practice of psychology means the observation, description, evaluation, interpretation, or modification of human behavior by the application of psychological principles, methods, or procedures for the purpose of preventing or eliminating symptomatic, maladaptive, or undesired behavior and of enhancing interpersonal relationships, work and life adjustment, personal effectiveness, behavioral health, and mental health.
(2) The practice of psychology includes, but is not limited to, psychological testing and the evaluation or assessment of personal characteristics such as intelligence, personality, abilities, interests, aptitudes, and psychophysiological and neuropsychological functioning; counseling, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, hypnosis, biofeedback, and behavior analysis and therapy; diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, alcoholism and substance abuse, disorders of habit or conduct, and the psychological aspects of physical illness, accident, injury, or disability; psychoeducational evaluation, therapy, remediation, and consultation; and supervision of qualified individuals performing services specified in this section.
(3) Psychological services may be rendered to individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and the public. The practice of psychology shall be construed within the meaning of this definition without regard to whether payment is received for services rendered.


38-3109. Psychologist, defined. Psychologist means a person licensed to engage in the practice of psychology in this or another jurisdiction. The terms certified, registered, chartered, or any other term chosen by a jurisdiction to authorize the autonomous practice of psychology shall be considered equivalent terms.


38-3110. Representation as a psychologist, defined. Representation as a psychologist means that the person uses any title or description of services which incorporates the words psychology, psychological, or psychologist or which implies that he or she possesses expert qualification in any area of psychology or that the person offers to individuals or to groups of individuals services defined as the practice of psychology.


38-3111. Psychology; references; how construed. (1) Unless otherwise expressly stated, references to licensed psychologists in the Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Act, in the Psychology Practice Act, in the Sex Offender Commitment Act, and in section 44-513 means only psychologists licensed under section 38-3114 and does not mean persons holding a special license under section 38-3116 or holding a provisional license under the Psychology Practice Act.

(2) Any reference to a person certified to practice clinical psychology under the law in effect immediately prior to September 1, 1994, and any equivalent reference under the law of another jurisdiction, including, but not limited to, certified clinical psychologist, health care practitioner in psychology, or certified health care provider, shall be construed to refer to a psychologist licensed under the Uniform Credentialing Act except for persons licensed under section 38-3116 or holding a provisional license under the Psychology Practice Act.


38-3112. Board; membership; qualifications. The board shall consist of five professional members and two public members appointed pursuant to section 38-158. The members shall meet the requirements of sections 38-164 and 38-165, except that two of the five years of experience for professional members may have been served in teaching or research.


38-3113. Other practices and activities; act, how construed. Nothing in the Psychology Practice Act shall be construed to prevent:

(1) The teaching of psychology, the conduct of psychological research, or the provision of psychological services or consultation to organizations or institutions if such teaching, research, or service does not involve the delivery or supervision of direct psychological services to individuals or groups of individuals who are themselves, rather than a third party, the intended beneficiaries of such services, without regard to the source or extent of payment for services rendered. Nothing in the act shall prevent the provision of expert testimony by psychologists who are otherwise exempted by the act. Persons holding a doctoral degree in psychology from an institution of higher education may use the title psychologist in conjunction with the activities permitted by this subdivision;

(2) Members of other recognized professions that are licensed, certified, or regulated under the laws of this state from rendering services consistent with their professional training and code of ethics and within the scope of practice as set out in the statutes regulating their professional practice if they do not represent themselves to be psychologists;

(3) Duly recognized members of the clergy from functioning in their ministerial capacity if they do not represent themselves to be psychologists or their services as psychological;

(4) Persons who are certified as school psychologists by the State Board of Education from using the title school psychologist and practicing psychology as defined in the Psychology Practice Act if such practice is restricted to regular employment within a setting under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education. Such individuals shall be employees of the educational setting and not independent contractors providing psychological services to educational settings; or

(5) Any of the following persons from engaging in activities defined as the practice of psychology if they do not
represent themselves by the title psychologist, if they do not use terms other than psychological trainee, psychological intern, psychological resident, or psychological assistant to refer to themselves, and if they perform their activities under the supervision and responsibility of a psychologist in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated under the Psychology Practice Act:

(a) A matriculated graduate student in psychology whose activities constitute a part of the course of study for a graduate degree in psychology at an institution of higher education;

(b) An individual pursuing postdoctoral training or experience in psychology, including persons seeking to fulfill the requirements for licensure under the act; or

(c) An individual with a master's degree in clinical, counseling, or educational psychology or an educational specialist degree in school psychology who administers and scores and may develop interpretations of psychological testing under the supervision of a psychologist. Such individuals shall be deemed to be conducting their duties as an extension of the legal and professional authority of the supervising psychologist and shall not independently provide interpretive information or treatment recommendations to clients or other health care professionals prior to obtaining appropriate supervision. The department, with the recommendation of the board, may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations governing the conduct and supervision of persons referred to in this subdivision, including the number of such persons that may be supervised by a licensed psychologist.

Persons who have carried out the duties described in this subdivision as part of their employment in institutions accredited by the Department of Health and Human Services, the State Department of Education, or the Department of Correctional Services for a period of two years prior to September 1, 1994, may use the title psychologist associate in the context of their employment in such settings. Use of the title shall be restricted to duties described in this subdivision, and the title shall be used in its entirety. Partial or abbreviated use of the title and use of the title beyond what is specifically authorized in this subdivision shall constitute the unlicensed practice of psychology.


38-3114. Applicant for license; qualifications. An applicant for licensure as a psychologist shall:

(1) Possess a doctoral degree from a program of graduate study in professional psychology from an institution of higher education. The degree shall be obtained from a program of graduate study in psychology that meets the standards of accreditation adopted by the American Psychological Association. Any applicant from a doctoral program in psychology that does not meet such standards shall present a certificate of retraining from a program of respecialization that does meet such standards;

(2) Prior to taking the examination, demonstrate that he or she has completed two years of supervised professional experience. One year of such experience shall be an internship meeting the standards of accreditation adopted by the American Psychological Association, and one year shall be supervised postdoctoral experience. The criteria for appropriate supervision shall be determined by the board. Postdoctoral experience shall be compatible with the knowledge and skills acquired during formal doctoral or postdoctoral education in accordance with professional requirements and relevant to the intended area of practice; and

(3) Pass an examination. The board shall approve and the board or department shall administer examinations to qualified applicants on at least an annual basis. The board shall determine the subject matter and scope of the examination and shall require a written examination, an oral examination, or both a written examination and an oral examination of each candidate for licensure. The board may approve a national standardized examination and any examination developed by the board.


38-3115. Waiver of examination; when. The department may waive all or portions of the examination required by section 38-3114 (1) if a psychologist has been licensed in another jurisdiction and if the requirements for licensure in that jurisdiction are equal to or exceed the requirements for licensure in Nebraska, (2) for psychologists meeting the requirements of section 38-3117, or (3) for an applicant who is board-certified in an area of professional psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology.


38-3116. Special license; supervisory relationship; application; contents; use of title; disclosure. (1) Any psychological practice that involves the diagnosis and treatment of major mental and emotional disorders by a person holding a special license shall be done under the supervision of a licensed psychologist as determined by the board. A psychologist holding a special license shall not supervise mental health practitioners or independently evaluate persons under the Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Act or the Sex Offender
Commitment Act.

(2) An application for a supervisory relationship shall be submitted to the department. The application shall contain:
   (a) A general description of the supervisee's practice and the plan of supervision;
   (b) A statement by the supervisor that he or she has the necessary experience and training to supervise this area of practice; and
   (c) A statement by the supervisor that he or she accepts the legal and professional responsibility for the supervisee's practice with individuals having major mental and emotional disorders.

(3) Psychologists practicing with special licenses may continue to use the title licensed psychologist but shall disclose supervisory relationships to clients or patients for whom supervision is required and to third-party payors when relevant. Psychologists who wish to continue supervisory relationships existing immediately prior to September 1, 1994, with qualified physicians may do so if a letter as described in this section as it existed prior to December 1, 2008, was received by the board within three months after September 1, 1994.


38-3117. Applicant with prior experience; issuance of license; conditions. Notwithstanding section 38-3114, the department shall license an applicant who:
   (1) Has at least twenty years of licensure to practice psychology in a United States or Canadian jurisdiction when the license was based on a doctoral degree;
   (2) Has had no disciplinary sanction during the entire period of licensure; and
   (3) Has passed the Nebraska board-developed examination.


38-3118. Reciprocal license; conditions. Notwithstanding section 38-3114, the department may issue a license as a psychologist to any individual who qualifies for such a license pursuant to an agreement of reciprocity entered into by the department, with the recommendation of the board, with the board or boards of another jurisdiction or multiple jurisdictions.


38-3119. Temporary practice permitted; when. Nothing in the Psychology Practice Act shall be construed to prohibit the practice of psychology in this state by a person holding a doctoral degree in psychology from an institution of higher education who is licensed as a psychologist under the laws of another jurisdiction if the requirements for a license in the other jurisdiction are equal to or exceed the requirements for licensure in Nebraska and if the person provides no more than an aggregate of thirty days of professional services as a psychologist per year as defined in the rules and regulations. Psychologists practicing under this section shall notify the department of the nature and location of their practice and provide evidence of their licensure in another jurisdiction.

Upon determination that the applicant has met the requirements of this section, the department shall issue a letter permitting the practice. An individual's permission to practice under this section may be revoked if it is determined by the department that he or she has engaged in conduct defined as illegal, unprofessional, or unethical under the statutes, rules, or regulations governing the practice of psychology in Nebraska.


38-3120. Temporary practice pending licensure permitted; when. A psychologist licensed under the laws of another jurisdiction may be authorized by the department to practice psychology for a maximum of one year if the psychologist has made application to the department for licensure and has met the educational and experience requirements for licensure in Nebraska, if the requirements for licensure in the former jurisdiction are equal to or exceed the requirements for licensure in Nebraska, and if the psychologist is not the subject of a past or pending disciplinary action in another jurisdiction. Denial of licensure shall terminate this authorization.


38-3121. Reciprocity. The department, with the recommendation of the board, may issue a license based on
licensure in another jurisdiction to practice as a psychologist to a person who meets the requirements of the Psychology Practice Act or substantially equivalent requirements as determined by the department, with the recommendation of the board.


38-3122. Provisional license; requirements. A person who needs to obtain the required one year of supervised postdoctoral experience in psychology pursuant to subdivision (2) of section 38-3114 shall obtain a provisional license to practice psychology. An applicant for a provisional license to practice psychology shall:

(1) Have a doctoral degree from an institution of higher education in a program of graduate study in professional psychology that meets the standards of accreditation adopted by the American Psychological Association or its equivalent. If the program is not accredited by the American Psychological Association, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence of equivalence. Any applicant from a program that does not meet such standards shall present a certificate of retraining from a program of respecialization that does meet such standards;

(2) Have completed one year of supervised professional experience in an internship as provided in subdivision (2) of section 38-3114;

(3) Apply prior to beginning the year of registered supervised postdoctoral experience; and

(4) Submit to the department:

(a) An official transcript showing proof of a doctoral degree in psychology from an institution of higher education;

(b) A certified copy of the applicant's birth certificate or other evidence of having attained the age of nineteen years; and

(c) A registration of supervisory relationship pursuant to section 38-3116.


38-3123. Provisional license; approve or deny application. The department shall approve or deny a complete application for a provisional license to practice psychology within one hundred fifty days after receipt of the application.


38-3124. Provisional license; title; duties. A psychologist practicing with a provisional license shall use the title Provisionally Licensed Psychologist. A provisionally licensed psychologist shall disclose supervisory relationships to clients or patients for whom supervision is required and to third parties when relevant. A provisionally licensed psychologist shall not supervise other mental health professionals or independently evaluate persons under the Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Act or the Sex Offender Commitment Act.


38-3125. Provisional license; expiration. A provisional license to practice psychology expires upon receipt of a license to practice psychology or two years after the date of issuance, whichever occurs first.


38-3126. Fees. The department shall establish and collect fees for credentialing under the Psychology Practice Act as provided in sections 38-151 to 38-157.


38-3127. Additional grounds for disciplinary action. In addition to the grounds for disciplinary action found in sections 38-178 and 38-179, a credential subject to the Psychology Practice Act may be denied, refused renewal, limited, revoked, or suspended or have other disciplinary measures taken against it in accordance with section 38-196 when the applicant or licensee fails to disclose the information required by section 38-3124.


38-3128. Limitation of practice; board; duties. The board shall ensure through rules and regulations and enforcement that psychologists limit their practice to demonstrated areas of competence as documented by relevant professional education, training, and experience.

date December 1, 2008.

38-3129. **Code of conduct.** A psychologist and anyone under his or her supervision shall conduct his or her professional activities in conformity with the code of conduct.


38-3130. **Representation as a psychologist; unlawful practice; violation; penalty.** (1) It shall be a violation of the Psychology Practice Act for any person not licensed in accordance with the act to represent himself or herself as a psychologist. It shall be a violation of the act for any person not licensed in accordance with the act to engage in the practice of psychology whether practicing as an individual, firm, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, agency, or other entity.

(2) Any person who represents himself or herself as a psychologist in violation of the act or who engages in the practice of psychology in violation of the act shall be guilty of a Class II misdemeanor. Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense.

(3) Any person filing or attempting to file, as his or her own, a diploma or license of another or a forged affidavit of identification shall be guilty of a Class IV felony.


38-3131. **Confidentiality; privilege; exceptions.** (1) The confidential relations and communications between psychologists and their clients and patients shall be on the same basis as those between physicians and their clients and patients as provided in section 27-504.

(2) In judicial proceedings, whether civil, criminal, or juvenile, in legislative and administrative proceedings, and in proceedings preliminary and ancillary thereto, a client or patient, or his or her legal guardian or personal representative, may refuse to disclose or may prevent the disclosure of confidential information, including information contained in administrative records, communicated to a psychologist, or to a person reasonably believed by the client or patient to be a psychologist, or the psychologist's or person's agents, for the purpose of diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of any mental and emotional disorder. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the psychologist shall be presumed to be authorized to claim the privilege on the client's or patient's behalf.

(3) This privilege may not be claimed by the client or patient, or on his or her behalf by authorized persons, in the following circumstances:

(a) When abuse or harmful neglect of children, the elderly, or disabled or incompetent individuals is known or reasonably suspected;

(b) When the validity of a will of a former client or patient of the psychologist is contested;

(c) When such information is necessary for the psychologist to defend against a malpractice action brought by the client or patient;

(d) When an immediate threat of physical violence against a readily identifiable victim is disclosed to the psychologist;

(e) When an immediate threat of self-inflicted injury is disclosed to the psychologist;

(f) When the client or patient, by alleging mental or emotional damages in litigation, puts his or her mental state in issue;

(g) When the client or patient is examined pursuant to court order;

(h) When the purpose of the proceeding is to substantiate and collect on a claim for mental or emotional health services rendered to the client or patient or any other cause of action arising out of the professional relationship; or

(i) In the context of investigations and hearings brought by the client or patient and conducted by the department, when violations of the Psychology Practice Act are at issue.


38-3132. **Duty to warn; limitation; immunity.** (1) No monetary liability and no cause of action shall arise against any psychologist for failing to warn of and protect from a client's or patient's threatened violent behavior or failing to predict and warn of and protect from a client's or patient's violent behavior except when the client or patient has communicated to the psychologist a serious threat of physical violence against a reasonably identifiable victim or victims.

(2) The duty to warn of or to take reasonable precautions to provide protection from violent behavior shall arise only under the limited circumstances specified in subsection (1) of this section. The duty shall be discharged
by the psychologist if reasonable efforts are made to communicate the threat to the victim or victims and to a law enforcement agency.

(3) No monetary liability and no cause of action shall arise against any person who is a psychologist for a confidence disclosed to third parties in an effort to discharge a duty arising under subsection (1) of this section in accordance with subsection (2) of this section.


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