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**CALIFORNIA BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES STATUTES AND
REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE PRACTICE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY**

CHAPTER 13. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

ARTICLE 1. REGULATION

§4980. NECESSITY OF LICENSE

- (a) (1) Many California families and many individual Californians are experiencing difficulty and distress, and are in need of wise, competent, caring, compassionate, and effective counseling in order to enable them to improve and maintain healthy family relationships.
- (2) Healthy individuals and healthy families and healthy relationships are inherently beneficial and crucial to a healthy society, and are our most precious and valuable natural resource. Licensed marriage and family therapists provide a crucial support for the well-being of the people and the State of California.
- (b) No person may engage in the practice of marriage and family therapy as defined by Section 4980.02, unless he or she holds a valid license as a marriage and family therapist, or unless he or she is specifically exempted from that requirement, nor may any person advertise himself or herself as performing the services of a marriage, family, child, domestic, or marital consultant, or in any way use these or any similar titles, including the letters "L.M.F.T." "M.F.T.," or "M.F.C.C.," or other name, word initial, or symbol in connection with or following his or her name to imply that he or she performs these services without a license as provided by this chapter. Persons licensed under Article 4 (commencing with Section 4996) of Chapter 14 of Division 2, or under Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900) may engage in such practice or advertise that they practice marriage and family therapy but may not advertise that they hold the marriage and family therapist's license.

§4980.02. PRACTICE OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND CHILD COUNSELING; APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

- (a) For the purposes of this chapter, the practice of marriage and family therapy shall mean the application of psychotherapeutic and family systems theories, principles, and methods in the delivery of services to individuals, couples, or groups in order to assess, evaluate, and treat relational issues, emotional disorders, behavioral problems, mental illness, alcohol and substance use, and to modify intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviors.
- (b) The application of marriage and family therapy principles and methods includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - (1) Assessment, evaluation, and prognosis.
 - (2) Treatment, planning, and evaluation.
 - (3) Individual, relationship, family, or group therapeutic interventions.
 - (4) Relational therapy.
 - (5) Psychotherapy.
 - (6) Client education.
 - (7) Clinical case management.
 - (8) Consultation.
 - (9) Supervision.
 - (10) Use, application, and integration of the coursework and training required by Sections 4980.36, 4980.37, and 4980.41, as applicable.
- (c) The amendments to this section made by the act adding this subdivision do not constitute a change in, but are declaratory of, existing law. It is the intent of the Legislature that these amendments shall not be construed to expand or constrict the existing scope of practice of a person licensed pursuant to this chapter.

§4980.03. DEFINITIONS

- (a) "Board," as used in this chapter, means the Board of Behavioral Sciences.
- (b) "Associate," as used in this chapter, means an unlicensed person who has earned a master's or doctoral degree qualifying the person for licensure and is registered with the board as an associate.
- (c) "Trainee," as used in this chapter, means an unlicensed person who is currently enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program, as specified in Sections 4980.36 and 4980.37, that is designed to qualify the person for licensure under this chapter, and who has completed no less than 12 semester units or 18 quarter units of coursework in any qualifying degree program.
- (d) "Applicant for licensure," as used in this chapter, means an unlicensed person who has completed the required education and required hours of supervised experience for licensure.
- (e) "Advertise," as used in this chapter, includes, but is not limited to, any public communication, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 651, the issuance of any card, sign, or device to any person, or the causing, permitting, or allowing of any sign or marking on, or in, any building or structure, or in any newspaper or magazine or in any directory, or any printed matter whatsoever, with or without any limiting qualification. Signs within religious buildings or notices in church bulletins mailed to a congregation are not advertising within the meaning of this chapter.

- (f) “Experience,” as used in this chapter, means experience in interpersonal relationships, psychotherapy, marriage and family therapy, direct clinical counseling, and nonclinical practice that satisfies the requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.
- (g) “Supervisor,” as used in this chapter, means an individual who meets all of the following requirements:
 - (1) Has held an active license for at least two years within the five-year period immediately preceding any supervision as any of the following:
 - (A) A licensed professional clinical counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist, psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900), licensed clinical social worker, licensed educational psychologist, or equivalent out-of-state license. A licensed educational psychologist may only supervise the provision of educationally related mental health services that are consistent with the scope of practice of an educational psychologist, as specified in Section 4989.14.
 - (B) A physician and surgeon who is certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology or an out-of-state licensed physician and surgeon who is certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.
 - (2) For at least two years within the five-year period immediately preceding any supervision, has either practiced psychotherapy or provided direct clinical supervision of psychotherapy performed by marriage and family therapist trainees, associate marriage and family therapists, associate professional clinical counselors, or associate clinical social workers. Supervision of psychotherapy performed by a social work intern or a professional clinical counselor trainee shall be accepted if the supervision provided is substantially equivalent to the supervision required for registrants.
 - (3) Has received training in supervision as specified in this chapter and by regulation.
 - (4) Has not provided therapeutic services to the supervisee.
 - (5) Has and maintains a current and active license that is not under suspension or probation as one of the following:
 - (A) A marriage and family therapist, professional clinical counselor, clinical social worker, or licensed educational psychologist, issued by the board.
 - (B) A psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900).
 - (C) A physician and surgeon who is certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.
 - (6) Is not a spouse, domestic partner, or relative of the supervisee.
 - (7) Does not currently have or previously had a personal, professional, or business relationship with the supervisee that undermines the authority or effectiveness of the supervision.
- (h) “Client centered advocacy,” as used in this chapter, includes, but is not limited to, researching, identifying, and accessing resources, or other activities, related to obtaining or providing services and supports for clients or groups of clients receiving psychotherapy or counseling services.
- (i) “Accredited,” as used in this chapter, means a school, college, or university accredited by either the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education or a regional or national institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education.
- (j) “Approved,” as used in this chapter, means a school, college, or university that possessed unconditional approval by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education at the time of the applicant’s graduation from the school, college, or university.

§4980.08. LICENSE TITLE NAME CHANGE

- (a) The title “licensed marriage, family and child counselor” or “marriage, family and child counselor” is hereby renamed “licensed marriage and family therapist” or “marriage and family therapist,” respectively. Any reference in any statute or regulation to a “licensed marriage, family and child counselor” or “marriage, family and child counselor” shall be deemed a reference to a “licensed marriage and family therapist” or “marriage and family therapist”.
- (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to expand or constrict the scope of practice of a person licensed pursuant to this chapter.
- (c) This section shall become operative July 1, 1999.

§4980.10. ENGAGING IN PRACTICE

A person engages in the practice of marriage and family therapy who performs or offers to perform or holds himself or herself out as able to perform this service for remuneration in any form, including donations.

§4980.30. APPLICATION FOR LICENSE; PAYMENT OF FEE

Except as otherwise provided herein, a person desiring to practice and to advertise the performance of marriage and family therapy services shall apply to the board for a license, pay the license fee required by this chapter, and obtain a license from the board.

§4980.31. DISPLAY OF LICENSE

A licensee shall display his or her license in a conspicuous place in the licensee’s primary place of practice.

§4980.34. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the Legislature that the board employ its resources for each and all of the following functions:

- (a) The licensing of marriage and family therapists, clinical social workers, professional clinical counselors, and educational psychologists.
- (b) The development and administration of licensing examinations and examination procedures, as specified, consistent with prevailing standards for the validation and use of licensing and certification tests. Examinations shall measure knowledge and abilities demonstrably important to the safe, effective practice of the profession.
- (c) Enforcement of laws designed to protect the public from incompetent, unethical, or unprofessional practitioners.
- (d) Consumer education.

§4980.39. ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK: AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE

- (a) An applicant for licensure whose education qualifies him or her under Section 4980.37 shall complete, as a condition of licensure, a minimum of 10 contact hours of coursework in aging and long-term care, which may include, but is not limited to, the biological, social, and psychological aspects of aging. On and after January 1, 2012, this coursework shall include instruction on the assessment and reporting of, as well as treatment related to, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect.
- (b) Coursework taken in fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure pursuant to this chapter, or in a separate course of study, may, at the discretion of the board, fulfill the requirements of this section.
- (c) In order to satisfy the coursework requirement of this section, the applicant shall submit to the board a certification from the chief academic officer of the educational institution from which the applicant graduated stating that the coursework required by this section is included within the institution's required curriculum for graduation, or within the coursework, that was completed by the applicant.
- (d) The board shall not issue a license to the applicant until the applicant has met the requirements of this section.

§4980.395. REQUIRED TRAINING OR COURSEWORK: PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES VIA TELEHEALTH

- (a) On or after July 1, 2023, an applicant for licensure as a marriage and family therapist shall show, as part of the application, that they have completed a minimum of three hours of training or coursework in the provision of mental health services via telehealth, which shall include law and ethics related to telehealth. This requirement shall be met in one of the following ways:
 - (1) Obtained as part of their qualifying graduate degree program. To satisfy this requirement, the applicant shall submit to the board a written certification from the registrar or training director of the educational institution or program from which the applicant graduated stating that the coursework required by this section is included within the institution's curriculum required for graduation at the time the applicant graduated, or within the coursework that was completed by the applicant.
 - (2) Obtained by completing a continuing education course that meets the requirements of Section 4980.54. To satisfy this requirement, the applicant shall submit to the board a certification of completion.
- (b) As a one-time requirement, a licensee before the time of their first renewal after July 1, 2023, or an applicant for reactivation or reinstatement to an active license status on or after July 1, 2023, shall have completed a minimum of three hours of training or coursework in the provision of mental health services via telehealth, which shall include law and ethics related to telehealth, using one of the methods specified in subdivision (a).
- (c) Proof of compliance with subdivision (b) shall be certified under penalty of perjury that they are in compliance with this section and shall be retained for submission to the board upon request.

§4980.396. REQUIRED COURSEWORK OR SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE: SUICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

- (a) On or after January 1, 2021, an applicant for licensure as a marriage and family therapist shall show, as part of the application, that they have completed a minimum of six hours of coursework or applied experience under supervision in suicide risk assessment and intervention. This requirement shall be met in one of the following ways:
 - (1) Obtained as part of their qualifying graduate degree program. To satisfy this requirement, the applicant shall submit to the board a written certification from the registrar or training director of the educational institution or program from which the applicant graduated stating that the coursework required by this section is included within the institution's curriculum required for graduation at the time the applicant graduated, or within the coursework that was completed by the applicant.
 - (2) Obtained as part of their applied experience. Applied experience can be met in any of the following settings: practicum or associateship that meets the requirement of this chapter, formal postdoctoral placement that meets the requirements of Section 2911, or other qualifying supervised experience. To satisfy this requirement, the applicant shall submit to the board a written certification from the director of training for the program or primary supervisor where the qualifying experience has occurred stating that the training required by this section is included within the applied experience.
 - (3) By taking a continuing education course that meets the requirements of Section 4980.54. To satisfy this requirement, the applicant shall submit to the board a certification of completion.
- (b) As a one-time requirement, a licensee prior to the time of their first renewal after January 1, 2021, or an applicant for reactivation or reinstatement to an active license status on or after January 1, 2021, shall have completed a minimum of six hours of coursework or applied experience under supervision in suicide risk assessment and intervention, using one of the methods specified in subdivision (a). Proof of compliance with this section shall be certified under penalty of perjury that they are in compliance with this section and shall be retained for submission to the board upon request.

§4980.395. CALIFORNIA LAW AND ETHICS: EXAMINATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

- (a) Except as provided in subdivision (a) of Section 4980.398, each applicant and registrant shall obtain a passing score on a board-administered California law and ethics examination in order to qualify for licensure.
- (b) A registrant shall participate in a board-administered California law and ethics examination before their registration renewal.
- (c) If an applicant fails the California law and ethics examination, they may retake the examination, upon payment of the required fees, without further application.
- (d) The board shall not issue a subsequent registration number unless the applicant has passed the California law and ethics examination.
- (e) A registrant shall complete a minimum of

§4980.40. QUALIFICATIONS

An applicant for licensure shall have all the following qualifications:

- (a) Meet the educational requirements of Section 4980.36 or both Sections 4980.37 and 4980.41, as applicable.
- (b) Be at least 18 years of age.
- (c) Have at least two years of experience as specified in this chapter and its corresponding regulations.
- (d) Successfully pass a California law and ethics examination and a clinical examination. An applicant who has successfully passed a previously administered written examination may be subsequently required to take and pass another written examination.
- (e) Not be subject to denial of licensure under Section 480. The board shall not issue a registration or license to any person who has been convicted of a crime in this or another state or in a territory of the United States that involves sexual abuse of children or who is required to register pursuant to Section 290 of the Penal Code or the equivalent in another state or territory, in accordance with Section 480.

§4980.44. ASSOCIATE NOTICE TO CLIENT OR PATIENT; ADVERTISEMENTS

An associate marriage and family therapist employed under this chapter shall comply with the following requirements:

- (a) Inform each client or patient prior to performing any mental health and related services that he or she is an unlicensed registered associate marriage and family therapist, provide his or her registration number and the name of his or her employer, and indicate whether he or she is under the supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed clinical social worker, licensed professional clinical counselor, psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900), licensed educational psychologist, or a licensed physician and surgeon certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.
- (b) (1) Any advertisement by or on behalf of a registered associate marriage and family therapist shall include, at a minimum, all of the following information:
 - (A) That he or she is a registered associate marriage and family therapist.
 - (B) The associate's registration number.
 - (C) The name of his or her employer.
 - (D) That he or she is supervised by a licensed person.
- (2) The abbreviation "AMFT" shall not be used in an advertisement unless the title "registered associate marriage and family therapist" appears in the advertisement.

§4980.46. FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES

Any licensed marriage and family therapist who conducts a private practice under a fictitious business name shall not use any name which is false, misleading, or deceptive, and shall inform the patient, prior to the commencement of treatment, of the name and license designation of the owner or owners of the practice.

§4980.50. EXAMINATION; ISSUANCE OF LICENSE; EXAMINATION RECORD RETENTION; SEVEN YEAR LIMITATION ON WRITTEN EXAMINATION

- (a) Every applicant who meets the educational and experience requirements and applies for a license as a marriage and family therapist shall be examined by the board. The examinations shall be as set forth in subdivision (d) of Section 4980.40. The examinations shall be given at least twice a year at a time and place and under supervision as the board may determine. The board shall examine the candidate with regard to his or her knowledge and professional skills and his or her judgment in the utilization of appropriate techniques and methods.
- (b) The board shall not deny any applicant, who has submitted a complete application for examination, admission to the licensure examinations required by this section if the applicant meets the educational and experience requirements of this chapter, and has not committed any acts or engaged in any conduct that would constitute grounds to deny licensure.
- (c) The board shall not deny any applicant, whose application for licensure is complete, admission to the standard written examination, nor shall the board postpone or delay any applicant's standard written examination or delay informing the candidate of the results of the standard written examination, solely upon the receipt by the board of a complaint alleging acts or conduct that would constitute grounds to deny licensure.
- (d) If an applicant for examination who has passed the California law and ethics examination is the subject of a complaint or is under board investigation for acts or conduct that, if proven to be true, would constitute grounds for the board to deny licensure, the board shall permit the applicant to take the clinical examination for licensure, but may notify the applicant that licensure will not be granted pending completion of the investigation.
- (e) Notwithstanding Section 135, the board may deny any applicant who has previously failed either the California law and ethics examination or the clinical examination permission to retake either examination pending completion of the investigation of any complaints against the applicant. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the board from denying an applicant admission to any examination, or refusing to issue a license to any applicant when an accusation or statement of issues has been filed against the applicant pursuant to Sections 11503 and 11504 of the Government Code, respectively, or the applicant has been denied in accordance with subdivision (b) of Section 485.
- (f) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board may destroy all examination materials two years following the date of an examination.
- (g) An applicant for licensure shall not be eligible to participate in the clinical examination if he or she fails to obtain a passing score on the clinical examination within seven years from his or her initial attempt, unless he or she takes and obtains a passing score on the current version of the California law and ethics examination.
- (h) A passing score on the clinical examination shall be accepted by the board for a period of seven years from the date the examination was taken.

- (i) An applicant who has qualified pursuant to this chapter shall be issued a license as a marriage and family therapist in the form that the board may deem appropriate.

§4980.54. CONTINUING EDUCATION

- (a) The Legislature recognizes that the education and experience requirements in this chapter constitute only minimal requirements to ensure that an applicant is prepared and qualified to take the licensure examinations as specified in subdivision (d) of Section 4980.40 and, if an applicant passes those examinations, to begin practice.
- (b) In order to continuously improve the competence of licensed and registered marriage and family therapists and as a model for all psychotherapeutic professions, the Legislature encourages all licensees and registrants to regularly engage in continuing education related to the profession or scope of practice as defined in this chapter.
- (c)
 - (1) Except as provided in subdivision (e), the board shall not renew any license pursuant to this chapter unless the applicant certifies to the board, on a form prescribed by the board, that the applicant has completed not less than 36 hours of approved continuing education in or relevant to the field of marriage and family therapy in the preceding two years, as determined by the board.
 - (2) The board shall not renew any registration pursuant to this chapter unless the registrant certifies under penalty of perjury to the board, and on a form prescribed by the board, that they have completed not less than three hours of continuing education on the subject of California law and ethics during the preceding year.
- (d) The board shall have the right to audit the records of any applicant to verify the completion of the continuing education requirement. Applicants shall maintain records of completion of required continuing education coursework for a minimum of two years and shall make these records available to the board for auditing purposes upon request.
- (e) The board may establish exceptions from the continuing education requirements of this section for good cause, as defined by the board.
- (f) The continuing education shall be obtained from one of the following sources:
 - (1) An accredited school or state-approved school that meets the requirements set forth in Section 4980.36 or 4980.37. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as requiring coursework to be offered as part of a regular degree program.
 - (2) Other continuing education providers, as specified by the board by regulation.
- (g) The board shall establish, by regulation, a procedure for identifying acceptable providers of continuing education courses, and all providers of continuing education, as described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (f), shall adhere to procedures established by the board. The board may revoke or deny the right of a provider to offer continuing education coursework pursuant to this section for failure to comply with this section or any regulation adopted pursuant to this section.
- (h) Training, education, and coursework by approved providers shall incorporate one or more of the following:
 - (1) Aspects of the discipline that are fundamental to the understanding or the practice of marriage and family therapy.
 - (2) Aspects of the discipline of marriage and family therapy in which significant recent developments have occurred.
 - (3) Aspects of other disciplines that enhance the understanding or the practice of marriage and family therapy.
- (i) A system of continuing education for licensed marriage and family therapists shall include courses directly related to the diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of the client population being served.
- (j) The continuing education requirements of this section shall comply fully with the guidelines for mandatory continuing education established by the Department of Consumer Affairs pursuant to Section 166.

§4980.55. DISCLOSURE OF COUNSELOR'S QUALIFICATIONS

As a model for all therapeutic professions, and to acknowledge respect and regard for the consuming public, all licensed marriage and family therapists are encouraged to provide to each client, at an appropriate time and within the context of the psychotherapeutic relationship, an accurate and informative statement of the therapist's experience, education, specialties, professional orientation, and any other information deemed appropriate by the licensee.

§4980.57. CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR SPOUSAL OR PARTNER ABUSE

- (a) The board shall require a licensee who began graduate study prior to January 1, 2004, to take a continuing education course during his or her first renewal period after the operative date of this section in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention strategies, including community resources, cultural factors, and same gender abuse dynamics. On and after January 1, 2005, the course shall consist of not less than seven hours of training. Equivalent courses in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention strategies taken prior to the operative date of this section or proof of equivalent teaching or practice experience may be submitted to the board and at its discretion, may be accepted in satisfaction of this requirement.
- (b) Continuing education courses taken pursuant to this section shall be applied to the 36 hours of approved continuing education required under subdivision (c) of Section 4980.54.

§4980.60. RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (a) The board may adopt those rules and regulations as may be necessary to enable it to carry into effect the provisions of this chapter. The adoption, amendment, or repeal of those rules and regulations shall be made in accordance with Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.
- (b) The board may, by rules or regulations, adopt, amend, or repeal rules of advertising and professional conduct appropriate to the establishment and maintenance of a high standard of integrity in the profession, provided that the rules or regulations are not inconsistent with Section 4982. Every person who holds a license to practice marriage and family therapy shall be governed by the rules of professional conduct.

§4980.70. ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL

Except as provided by Section 159.5, the board may employ whatever additional personnel is necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

§4980.72. APPLICANTS LICENSED OUT-OF-STATE; EQUIVALENT REQUIREMENTS

The board may issue a license to a person who, at the time of submitting an application for a license pursuant to this chapter, holds a license in another jurisdiction of the United States as a marriage and family therapist at the highest level for independent clinical practice if all of the following requirements are met:

- (a) The applicant's license in the other jurisdiction has been current, active, and unrestricted in that jurisdiction for at least two years immediately before the date the application was received by the board. The applicant shall disclose to the board for review any past restrictions or disciplinary action on an out-of-state license, and the board shall consider these actions in determining whether to issue a license to the applicant.
- (b) The applicant's degree that qualified the person for the out-of-state license is a master's or doctoral degree that was obtained from an accredited or approved institution.
- (c) The applicant complies with the fingerprint requirements established by Section 144.
- (d) The applicant completes the coursework specified in paragraphs (1) and (2) from an accredited institution or an approved institution or from an acceptable provider of continuing education as specified in Section 4980.54. Undergraduate coursework shall not satisfy these requirements.
 - (1) A minimum of 12 hours of coursework in California law and professional ethics that includes, but is not limited to, instruction in advertising, scope of practice, scope of competence, treatment of minors, confidentiality, dangerous clients, psychotherapist-client privilege, recordkeeping, client access to records, state and federal laws relating to confidentiality of patient health information, dual relationships, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, online therapy, insurance reimbursement, civil liability, disciplinary actions and unprofessional conduct, ethics complaints and ethical standards, termination of therapy, standards of care, relevant family law, therapist disclosures to clients, the application of legal and ethical standards in different types of work settings, and licensing law and the licensing process.
 - (2) At least one semester unit, or 15 hours, of instruction that includes an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position.
- (e) The applicant obtains a minimum of seven contact hours of training or coursework in child abuse assessment and reporting, as specified in Section 28, and any regulations promulgated pursuant to that section.
- (f) On or after January 1, 2021, the applicant shall show proof of completion of at least six hours of coursework or applied experience under supervision in suicide risk assessment and intervention using one of the methods specified in Section 4980.396.
- (g) The applicant passes the board-administered California law and ethics examination specified in subdivision (d) of Section 4980.40. The clinical examination specified in subdivision (d) of Section 4980.40 shall be waived for an applicant qualifying under this section.
- (h) This section was developed based on an examination of the licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists on a national level. This section shall not be construed to apply to any provisions under this division or Division 3 (commencing with Section 5000) other than this act.

§4980.74. EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE GAINED OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA

- (a) This section applies to persons with education gained from an out-of-state school or experience gained outside of California who apply for licensure or registration and who do not qualify for a license under Section 4980.72.
- (b) The board shall accept education gained from an out-of-state school for purposes of satisfying licensure or registration requirements if the education is substantially equivalent, as defined in Section 4980.78, and the applicant complies with Section 4980.76, if applicable. The applicant's degree title need not be identical to that required by Section 4980.36 or 4980.37.
- (c) The board shall accept experience gained outside of California for purposes of satisfying licensure or registration requirements if the experience is substantially equivalent to the experience required by this chapter. If the applicant has fewer than 3,000 hours of qualifying supervised experience, the board shall accept as qualifying supervised experience the amount of time the applicant held an active license in good standing in another state or country as a marriage and family therapist at the highest level for independent clinical practice at a rate of 100 hours per month, up to a maximum of 1,200 hours.
- (d) An applicant who obtained a license or registration in another state or country may qualify for licensure with the board without taking the clinical examination specified in Section 4980.40 if both of the following conditions are met:
 - (1) The applicant obtained a passing score on the clinical licensing examination set forth in regulation as accepted by the board.
 - (2) The applicant's license or registration in that state or country is active, in good standing at the time of the application, and is not revoked, suspended, surrendered, denied, or otherwise restricted or encumbered.

§4980.76. DEGREE OBTAINED OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

An applicant for licensure or registration with a degree obtained from an educational institution outside the United States shall provide the board with a comprehensive evaluation of the degree performed by a foreign credential evaluation service that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES), and shall provide any other documentation the board deems necessary.

ARTICLE 2. DENIAL, SUSPENSION, AND REVOCATION

§4982. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The board may deny a license or registration or may suspend or revoke the license or registration of a licensee or registrant if the licensee or registrant has been guilty of unprofessional conduct. Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) The conviction of a crime substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a licensee or registrant under this chapter. The record of conviction shall be conclusive evidence only of the fact that the conviction occurred. The board may inquire into the circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime in order to fix the degree of discipline or to determine if the conviction is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a licensee or registrant under this chapter. A conviction has the same meaning as defined in Section 7.5. The board may order any license or registration suspended or revoked, or may decline to issue a license or registration when the time for appeal has elapsed, or the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal, or, when an order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of sentence. All actions pursuant to this subdivision shall be taken pursuant to Division 1.5 (commencing with Section 475).
- (b) Securing a license or registration by fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation on any application for licensure or registration submitted to the board, whether engaged in by an applicant for a license or registration, or by a licensee in support of any application for licensure or registration.
- (c) Administering to oneself any controlled substance or using of any of the dangerous drugs specified in Section 4022, or of any alcoholic beverage to the extent, or in a manner, as to be dangerous or injurious to the person applying for a registration or license or holding a registration or license under this chapter, or to any other person, or to the public, or, to the extent that the use impairs the ability of the person applying for or holding a registration or license to conduct with safety to the public the practice authorized by the registration or license. The board shall deny an application for a registration or license or revoke the license or registration of any person, other than one who is licensed as a physician and surgeon, who uses or offers to use drugs in the course of performing marriage and family therapy services.
- (d) Gross negligence or incompetence in the performance of marriage and family therapy.
- (e) Violating, attempting to violate, or conspiring to violate any of the provisions of this chapter or any regulation adopted by the board.
- (f) Misrepresentation as to the type or status of a license or registration held by the licensee or registrant or otherwise misrepresenting or permitting misrepresentation of the licensee's or registrant's education, professional qualifications, or professional affiliations to any person or entity.
- (g) Impersonation of another by any licensee, registrant, or applicant for a license or registration, or, in the case of a licensee or registrant, allowing any other person to use the licensee's or registrant's license or registration.
- (h) Aiding or abetting, or employing, directly or indirectly, any unlicensed or unregistered person to engage in conduct for which a license or registration is required under this chapter.
- (i) Intentionally or recklessly causing physical or emotional harm to any client.
- (j) The commission of any dishonest, corrupt, or fraudulent act substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a licensee or registrant.
- (k) Engaging in sexual relations with a client, or a former client within two years following termination of therapy, soliciting sexual relations with a client, or committing an act of sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct with a client, or committing an act punishable as a sexually related crime, if that act or solicitation is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a marriage and family therapist.
- (l) Performing, or holding oneself out as being able to perform, or offering to perform, or permitting any trainee, registered associate, or applicant for licensure under supervision to perform, any professional services beyond the scope of the license authorized by this chapter.
- (m) Failure to maintain confidentiality, except as otherwise required or permitted by law, of all information that has been received from a client in confidence during the course of treatment and all information about the client that is obtained from tests or other means.
- (n) Prior to the commencement of treatment, failing to disclose to the client or prospective client the fee to be charged for the professional services, or the basis upon which that fee will be computed.
- (o) Paying, accepting, or soliciting any consideration, compensation, or remuneration, whether monetary or otherwise, for the referral of professional clients. All consideration, compensation, or remuneration shall be in relation to professional counseling services actually provided by the licensee. This subdivision does not prevent collaboration among two or more licensees in a case or cases. However, a fee shall not be charged for that collaboration, except when disclosure of the fee has been made in compliance with subdivision (n).
- (p) Advertising in a manner that is false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive, as defined in Section 651.
- (q) Reproduction or description in public, or in any publication subject to general public distribution, of any psychological test or other assessment device, the value of which depends in whole or in part on the naivete of the subject, in ways that might invalidate the test or device.
- (r) Any conduct in the supervision of any registered associate, trainee, or applicant for licensure by any licensee that violates this chapter or any rules or regulations adopted by the board.
- (s) Performing or holding oneself out as being able to perform mental health services beyond the scope of one's competence, as established by one's education, training, or experience. This subdivision shall not be construed to expand the scope of the license authorized by this chapter.
- (t) Permitting a trainee, registered associate, or applicant for licensure under one's supervision or control to perform, or permitting the trainee, registered associate, or applicant for licensure to hold themselves out as competent to perform, mental health services beyond the trainee's, registered associate's, or applicant for licensure's level of education, training, or experience.
- (u) The violation of any statute or regulation governing the gaining and supervision of experience required by this chapter.

- (v) Failure to keep records consistent with sound clinical judgment, the standards of the profession, and the nature of the services being rendered.
- (w) Failure to comply with the child abuse reporting requirements of Section 11166 of the Penal Code.
- (x) Failure to comply with the elder and dependent adult abuse reporting requirements of Section 15630 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.
- (y) Willful violation of Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 123100) of Part 1 of Division 106 of the Health and Safety Code.
- (z) Failure to comply with Section 2290.5.
- (aa) (1) Engaging in an act described in Section 261, 286, 287, or 289 of, or former Section 288a of, the Penal Code with a minor or an act described in Section 288 or 288.5 of the Penal Code regardless of whether the act occurred prior to or after the time the registration or license was issued by the board. An act described in this subdivision occurring prior to the effective date of this subdivision shall constitute unprofessional conduct and shall subject the licensee to refusal, suspension, or revocation of a license under this section.
- (2) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that protection of the public, and in particular minors, from sexual misconduct by a licensee is a compelling governmental interest, and that the ability to suspend or revoke a license for sexual conduct with a minor occurring prior to the effective date of this section is equally important to protecting the public as is the ability to refuse a license for sexual conduct with a minor occurring prior to the effective date of this section.
- (ab) Engaging in any conduct that subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of an examination as described in Section 123.

§4982.05. ENFORCEMENT STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

- (a) Except as provided in subdivisions (b), (c), and (e) any accusation filed against a licensee pursuant to Section 11503 of the Government Code shall be filed within three years from the date the board discovers the alleged act or omission that is the basis for disciplinary action, or within seven years from the date the alleged act or omission that is the basis for disciplinary action occurred, whichever occurs first.
- (b) An accusation filed against a licensee pursuant to Section 11503 of the Government Code alleging the procurement of a license by fraud or misrepresentation is not subject to the limitations set forth in subdivision (a).
- (c) The limitation provided for by subdivision (a) shall be tolled for the length of time required to obtain compliance when a report required to be filed by the licensee or registrant with the board pursuant to Article 11 (commencing with Section 800) of Chapter 1 is not filed in a timely fashion.
- (d) If an alleged act or omission involves a minor, the seven-year limitations period provided for by subdivision (a) and the 10-year limitations period provided for by subdivision (e) shall be tolled until the minor reaches the age of majority.
- (e) An accusation filed against a licensee pursuant to Section 11503 of the Government Code alleging sexual misconduct shall be filed within three years after the board discovers the act or omission alleged as the grounds for disciplinary action, or within 10 years after the act or omission alleged as the grounds for disciplinary action occurs, whichever occurs first. This subdivision shall apply to a complaint alleging sexual misconduct received by the board on and after January 1, 2002.
- (f) The limitations period provided by subdivision (a) shall be tolled during any period if material evidence necessary for prosecuting or determining whether a disciplinary action would be appropriate is unavailable to the board due to an ongoing criminal investigation.
- (g) For purposes of this section, “discovers” means the later of the occurrence of any of the following with respect to each act or omission alleged as the basis for disciplinary action:
 - (1) The date the board received a complaint or report describing the act or omission.
 - (2) The date, subsequent to the original complaint or report, on which the board became aware of any additional acts or omissions alleged as the basis for disciplinary action against the same individual.
 - (3) The date the board receives from the complainant a written release of information pertaining to the complainant’s diagnosis and treatment.

UNCODIFIED LAW RELATING TO SECTION 4982.05

This act shall apply to all accusations filed on or after January 1, 2000.

§4982.1. MENTAL ILLNESS OR CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY; GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL TO LICENSE OR REGISTER

The board may refuse to issue any registration or license whenever it appears that an applicant may be unable to practice his or her profession safely due to mental illness or chemical dependency. The procedures set forth in Article 12.5 (commencing with Section 820) of Chapter 1 shall apply to any denial of a license or registration pursuant to this section.

§4982.15. PLACING OF LICENSE OR REGISTRATION ON PROBATION; CIRCUMSTANCES

- (a) The board may place a license or registration on probation under the following circumstances:
- (1) In lieu of, or in addition to, any order of the board suspending or revoking the license or registration of any licensee or associate.
 - (2) Upon the issuance of a license to an individual who has been guilty of unprofessional conduct, but who had otherwise completed all education and training and experience required for licensure.
 - (3) As a condition upon the reissuance or reinstatement of any license that has been suspended or revoked by the board.
- (b) The board may adopt regulations establishing a monitoring program to ensure compliance with any terms or conditions of probation imposed by the board pursuant to subdivision (a). The cost of probation or monitoring may be ordered to be paid by the licensee, registrant, or applicant.
- (c) The board, in its discretion, may require any licensee or registrant who has been placed on probation, or whose license or registration has been suspended, to obtain additional professional training, and to pass an examination upon completion of that training, and to pay any necessary examination fee. The examination may be written, oral, or a practical or clinical examination.

§4982.25. DENIAL OF APPLICATION OR SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF LICENSE OR REGISTRATION; GROUNDS

The board may deny any application, or may suspend or revoke any license or registration issued under this chapter, for any of the following:

- (a) Denial of licensure, revocation, suspension, restriction, or any other disciplinary action imposed by another state or territory or possession of the United States, or by any other governmental agency, on a license, certificate, or registration to practice marriage and family therapy, or any other healing art, shall constitute unprofessional conduct. A certified copy of the disciplinary action decision or judgment shall be conclusive evidence of that action.
- (b) Revocation, suspension, or restriction by the board of a license, certificate, or registration to practice as a clinical social worker, professional clinical counselor, or educational psychologist shall also constitute grounds for disciplinary action for unprofessional conduct against the licensee or registrant under this chapter.

§4982.26. DECISION CONTAINING FINDING THAT LICENSEE OR REGISTRANT ENGAGED IN SEXUAL CONTACT WITH PATIENT OR FORMER PATIENT; ORDER OF REVOCATION

The board shall revoke any license issued under this chapter upon a decision made in accordance with the procedures set forth in Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, that contains any finding of fact that the licensee or registrant engaged in any act of sexual contact, as defined in Section 729, when that act is with a patient, or with a former patient when the relationship was terminated primarily for the purpose of engaging in that act. The revocation shall not be stayed by the administrative law judge or the board.

§4982.3. CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS

The proceedings conducted under this article shall be held in accordance with Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

ARTICLE 3. PENALTIES

§4983. VIOLATION; MISDEMEANOR; PUNISHMENT

Any person who violates any of the provisions of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, or by a fine not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500), or by both.

§4983.1. INJUNCTION

In addition to other proceedings provided for in this chapter, whenever any person has engaged, or is about to engage, in any acts or practices which constitute, or will constitute, an offense against this chapter, the superior court in and for the county wherein the acts or practices take place, or are about to take place, may issue an injunction, or other appropriate order, restraining such conduct on application of the board, the Attorney General, or the district attorney of the county. The proceedings under this section shall be governed by Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 525) of Title 7 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure.