



Board of Behavioral Sciences

*Memo*

1625 North Market Blvd., Suite S-200  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
(916) 574-7830, (916) 574-8625 Fax  
www.bbs.ca.gov

**To:** Committee Members

**Date:** September 13, 2021

**From:** Rosanne Helms  
Legislative Manager

**Telephone:** (916) 574-7897

**Subject: Telehealth Coursework Requirement – Review of Draft Language**

The Telehealth Committee had previously expressed interest in requiring training or coursework regarding delivery of mental health services to clients via telehealth, to ensure its licensees are competent in its delivery.

### **Survey Results**

Board staff recently surveyed supervisors, school programs, associates, and students regarding various topics related to telehealth. The results of the survey were discussed at the September 9, 2021 Telehealth Committee meeting. Key takeaways regarding coursework were as follows:

- 34% of associates and 52% of students said their school provided coursework or training specific to providing services to clients via telehealth. 48% of associates and 68% of students feel that the coursework/training prepared them adequately.
- The primary topics associates and students would like to see covered if coursework were required in regard to providing clinical services via telehealth are: effective ways to work with clients via telehealth, assessing and addressing client risk factors, and legal and ethical issues.
- Commonly listed topics that supervisors believe should be covered if the Board were to require coursework and/or training include assessing and addressing client risk factors, and legal and ethical issues related to telehealth.
- 70% of supervisors who responded were in support of a board-required training regarding supervision via videoconferencing for supervisors, and felt the following topics should be covered: legal and ethical issues, and establishing/maintaining an effective supervisory relationship.

The survey results are shown in greater detail in **Item IV** of the meeting materials.

## Draft Language

Previously, the Committee directed staff to draft language requiring such training, using the recently added statute requiring coursework in suicide risk assessment and intervention as a model.

The draft language is shown in **Attachment A** and does the following:

- Requires applicants for licensure on or after January 1, 2023 to submit proof of completion of 6 hours of training or coursework in the provision of mental health services via telehealth, with their application.
- Requires licensees, upon their first renewal on or after January 1, 2023, to attest to having completed 6 hours of training or coursework in the provision of mental health services via telehealth.
- Specifies that the training or coursework is a one-time requirement, and may be completed either as part of the qualifying degree program, or by taking a continuing education course.

Please note that the draft language only applies to applicants applying for licensure and to current licensees. It does not address any type of training requirement for supervisors who utilize videoconference supervision. Any change to the supervisor training requirements would need to be done via regulation.

Under the Board's currently proposed supervision regulations (which the Board estimates may become effective by January 1, 2022), a one-time 15-hour training for new supervisors would be required, and would be required to cover the following:

“...current best practices and current industry standards, which include legal requirements, professional codes of ethics, and research focused on supervision, regarding the following:

(A) Competencies necessary for new supervisors;

(B) Goal setting and evaluation;

(C) The supervisor-supervisee relationship;

(D) California law and ethics, including legal and ethical issues related to supervision;

(E) Cultural variables, including, but not limited to, race, gender, social class, and religious beliefs;

(F) Contextual variables, such as treatment modalities, work settings, and use of technology;

(G) Supervision theories and literature; and

(H) Documentation and record keeping of the supervisee's client files, as well as documentation of supervision.”

Existing supervisors would not need to take a one-time 15-hour course, however they must complete 6 hours of continuing professional development each renewal cycle (this may include a course, but they also may choose to participate in other specified activities, such as teaching a supervision course or collaboration activities with other supervisors.)

### **Background: Current Required Coursework**

The Board already requires applicants for a license to complete a number of courses covering specified topic areas. Some of these topics must be covered in the degree program, while others are a condition of licensure, or are one-time requirements that are completed as continuing education. (Hour amounts are specified for some required topics, but not all):

- LMFT, LCSW, and LPCC applicants must complete specified coursework in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention. (BCP §§4980.36, 4980.41, 4996.2, 4999.32, 4999.33)
- LMFT, LCSW, and LPCC applicants must complete specified coursework in human sexuality. (BPC §§25, 4980.41, 4996.2, 4999.32, 4999.33, California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 16 §1807)
- All Board applicants must complete specified coursework in child abuse assessment and reporting (specified to be at least 7 hours). (BPC §§28, 4980.36, 4980.41, 4996.2, 4999.32, 4999.33, 16 CCR §1807.2)
- LMFT, LCSW, and LPCC applicants must complete specified coursework in aging and long-term care. (BPC §§4980.36, 4980.36, 4980.395, 4996.25, 4996.26, 4999.32, 4999.33)
- All Board applicants must complete specified coursework in alcoholism and other substance dependency. (BPC §§4980.36, 4980.41, 4996.2, 4999.32, 4999.33, 16 CCR §1810)
- LMFT, LCSW, and LPCC applicants must complete 7 hours of coursework in assessment and treatment of HIV/AIDS as a one-time requirement. Equivalent coursework or proof of teaching or practice experience may be submitted to the Board in lieu of the coursework requirement. (BPC §32, 16 CCR §1887.3)
- All applicants for a Board license must complete a minimum of 6 hours of coursework or applied experience under supervision in suicide risk assessment and intervention. Current licensees, at their first renewal on or after January 1, 2021, must certify that they have done this. (BPC §4980.396, 4989.23, 4996.27, 4999.66) This is the Board's newest one-time requirement.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee should discuss the language shown in **Attachment A**, and may wish to consider the following in its review:

1. Is 6 hours an appropriate amount of training or coursework?
2. Is the timing of when the training or coursework is required appropriate (at application for licensure for new applicants, at renewal for current licensees)? Should existing licensees be required to take the coursework?
3. The proposal does not allow applied experience to count, as the suicide risk assessment and intervention requirement does.
4. Is delayed implementation needed? (If successfully run as legislation next year, the bill would be signed in late September or early October of 2022. It would then become effective January 1, 2023, approximately 3 months later.)
5. Does the training or coursework description used in the proposal, “provision of mental health services via telehealth” accurately capture what the Board is trying to achieve? Should more specific course topics be called out?
6. The language does not address training for supervisors regarding videoconference supervision. If the Committee wishes to address this, it will need to be done separately via regulations, as discussed above.

## **References**

**Attachment A:** Proposed Language

**Reference 1:** [Current Law – BPC §4980.396: Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention Requirement for LMFT Applicants and Licensees](#)

**Reference 2:** [Current Law – California Code of Regulations \(CCR\) Title 16, §1887.3\(c\): Assessment and Treatment of HIV/AIDS Continuing Education Requirement for Licensees](#)

## ATTACHMENT A PROPOSED LANGUAGE

### ADD BPC § 4980.395. REQUIRED TRAINING OR COURSEWORK: DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES VIA TELEHEALTH

*Note: This proposed language is shown for LMFTs only at this time. Once the Committee reviews the language, corresponding language will be drafted for LEPs, LCSWs, and LPCCs*

(a) On or after January 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 six hours of training or coursework in the provision of mental health services via 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) 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, 2023, or an applicant for reactivation or reinstatement to an active license status on or after January 1, 2023, shall have completed a minimum of six hours of training or coursework in the provision of mental health services via 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.