

State of Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners Website: <http://psyexam.nv.gov/>

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From: <nbop@govmail.state.nv.us>

Date: Fri, Mar 13, 2020, 6:13 PM

Subject: COVID-19 Information From The Nevada Board Of Psychological Examiners

Dear Licensees and Registrants,

The Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners cares about the health and safety of our licensees, registrants, supervisors, supervisees, and the public. At our board meeting on March 13, 2020, the board discussed potential concerns regarding the practice of psychology arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic. This email is to provide information to help you navigate your practice in accordance with our current Nevada rules and regulations and the APA Code of Ethics.

Using Telepsychology for Psychotherapy and Supervision

The practice of telepsychology is defined in the APA guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology as the “provision of psychological services using telecommunication technologies”. You are permitted to engage in the practice of telepsychology as long as you have had adequate training and are practicing within your scope of practice as it pertains to telepsychology. Please consult NAC 641.208 (<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-641.html#NAC641Sec208>) and the APA Code of Ethics, Section 2 (<https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/ethics-code-2017.pdf>).

For the use of telepsychology for the supervision of psychological assistants, psychological interns, and psychological trainees, please review the adopted language in NAC 641.1057 Section 5: (<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Register/2018Register/R074-18AP.pdf>)

If you plan to use telepsychology options, please ensure you are following the APA Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology and the technology you use is HIPAA compliant. (<https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/telepsychology>)

Continuing Education Credits

Due to the CDC recommendations around “social distancing”, the board recognizes that many in-person continuing education courses may be cancelled or unavailable for a period of time. Effective January 30, 2019, our board updated our regulations to allow for “live” learning to include continuing education events that are delivered by real-time instruction via internet or teleconference. NAC 641.136 (1) states:

“To renew his or her license, a psychologist must certify to the Board that during the 2 years immediately preceding the date he or she submits an application for renewal, he or she has completed 30 hours of continuing education in courses approved by the board. At least 6 hours must include instruction in scientific and professional ethics and standards, and common areas of professional misconduct. At least 2 hours must include instruction in

evidence-based suicide prevention and awareness. Not more than 15 hours may be obtained from an approved home study course. A licensee may not receive credit for continuing education in which he or she is the instructor.”

“Home Study” is defined in NAC 641.007 as:

“A course of instruction designed for home study in which; 1. Instruction is provided to the participant on demand at a location at which the instructor is not physically present; and 2. There is no ability for the participant to communicate with the instructor in real time during the course of the instruction.”

HIPAA Rules Related to Confidentiality and Public Health

In the interest of avoiding harm to your patients, if you are aware that you have been exposed to COVID-19, it is your ethical mandate to inform your patients of the risk to allow them to take appropriate steps to protect their health and the health of others.

If a patient has been exposed to COVID-19 prior to visiting your office, or informs you after their visit that they have been exposed, according to HIPAA, you can inform other possible impacted patients who have visited your office. In the case of notifying other patients, you would need to take appropriate steps to protect any identifying information of the exposed patient.

If a public health official requests information from your office, you can provide names and contact information of the people who have visited your office only. You may not need to disclose the nature of their visit and/or identify them as a patient.

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/special/emergency/hipaa-privacy-emergency-situations.pdf>

Additional Resources

In accordance with the APA Code of Ethics, we encourage you to consider the health and safety of your patients, supervisees, and colleagues, as well as yourself above all else. Please see resources below that you may consult for additional information in considering best practices during this difficult time.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>

Department of Health and Human Services: COVID-19 Health Care Planning Checklist: <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/COVID19/Documents/COVID-19%20Healthcare%20Planning%20Checklist.pdf>

World Health Organization: Mental Health Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_2

American Psychological Association: Keeping Your Distance to Stay Safe: <https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/social-distancing>

Center for Disease Control: Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

American Telemedicine Association: Practice Guidelines for Video-based Online Mental Health Services: https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/operations-administration/practice-guidelines-for-video-based-online-mental-health-services_ATA_5_29_13.pdf

The Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners will meet again on April 17, 2020 and will have discussion about the impact of COVID-19 on the agenda for discussion. We invite you to attend the meeting with any questions or concerns you have about the impact of COVID-19 on the public and the practice of psychology in the State of Nevada. We wish you health and safety over the following months. Please reach out to the board office email at nbop@govmail.state.nv.us with any questions or concerns you may have.

Respectfully,

Whitney Owens, PsyD

Board President