

Volume 15

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Board Office Hours

The Board Office is closed to visitors;
board staff is currently working remotely,
so please email or leave a voicemail.

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Monday | 8:30–5 pm |
| Tuesday | 8:30–5 pm |
| Wednesday | 8:30–5 pm |
| Thursday | 8:30–5 pm |
| Friday | 8:30–5 pm |
| Saturday | Closed |
| Sunday | Closed |

Message From the Board Chair

On behalf of the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (NCBLCMHC), we welcome you to the Winter edition of the *Board Insider*.

Practicing as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC) is rewarding, but sometimes thankless work. The time and commitment invested into our craft and practice often go unnoticed. The deed of our service, however, is reflected through the health and healing occurring throughout the state of North Carolina. For that my friends ... I THANK YOU!

The counseling profession continues to evolve, adapting to new challenges and opportunities for mental health care. As a profession, we are continuously growing, as we have over 13,000 licensees and counting in the state of North Carolina. This progressive motion will continue to strengthen our foundation, efforts, and ability to provide effective clinical mental health care services. The demand for our services has never been greater, and with it comes the responsibility to advocate for and support those who rely on us to do so. Now more than ever, our work and presence are essential. Whether it's addressing the lingering effects of firearm and other forms of interpersonal violence, advocating for access to care, or integrating innovative approaches to therapy, LCMHCs are dedicated to leading the future of mental health care.

As we continue to navigate an ever-changing world, one thing remains steadfast—our commitment as LCMHCs to foster mental wellness and overall health for all North Carolinians. The resilience and dedication of clinical mental health counselors like you ensure that individuals, families, and communities continue to receive effective mental health services they need to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives. For that reason, I again THANK YOU for your unwavering dedication to the mental health profession and the constituents of North Carolina.

Stay Amazing!

Best,
Dr. Yasmin Gay
LCMHCS, CCJP, LCAS, CRC, CCTP, MAC, CCS




Dr. Yasmin Gay
Board Chair

NCBLCMHC Mission

The mission of the Board under NC GS Article 24 section 90-329 states that it is declared to be the public policy of this State that the activities of persons who render counseling services to the public be regulated to insure the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

Meet the Board

Dr. Yasmin Gay
Board Chair
LCMHCS
Congressional District 6

Dr. Nicole Stargell
Vice Chair
LCMHC
Congressional District 14

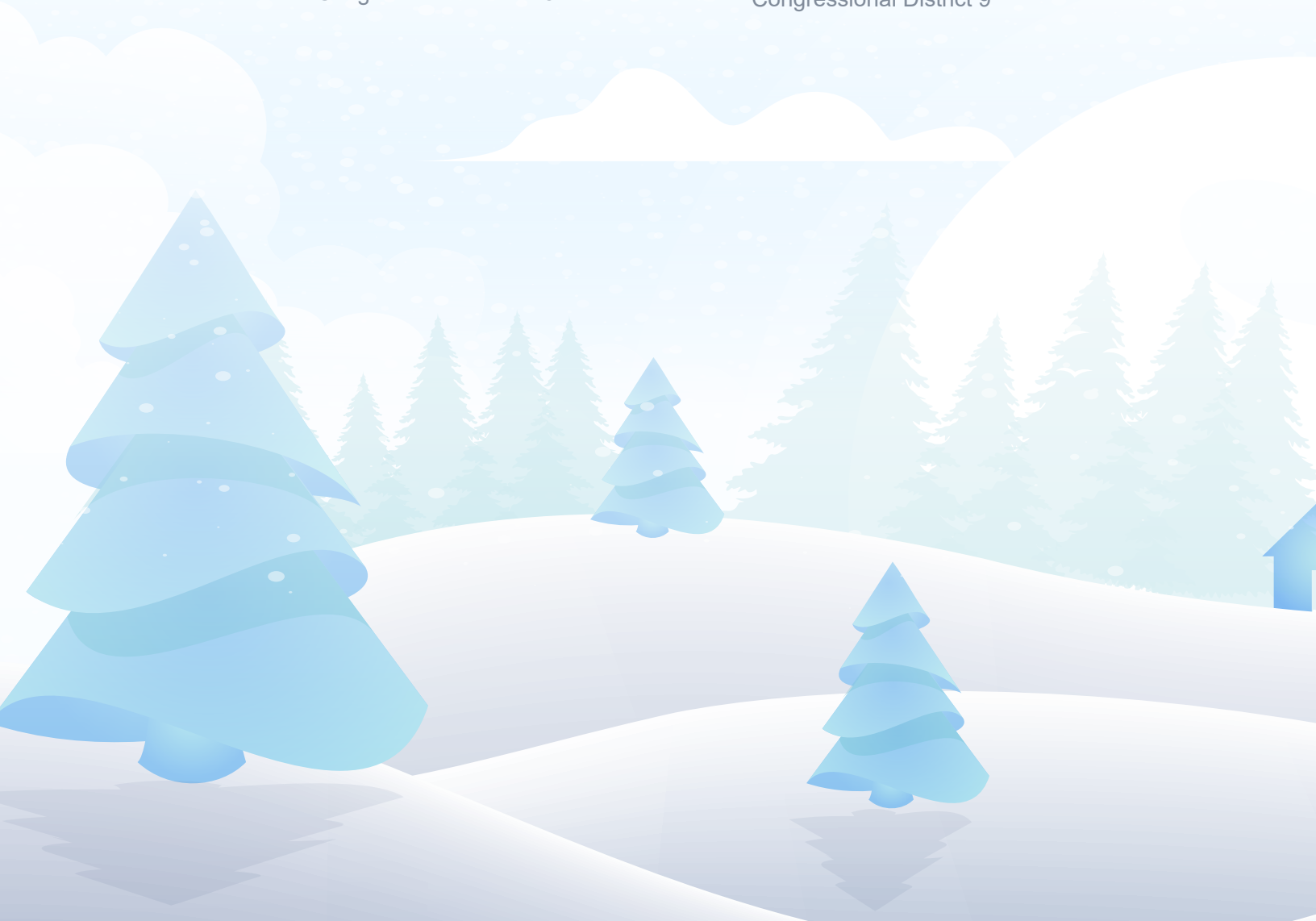
Bruce Garris
Secretary/Treasurer
Congressional District 7

Edward “Neal” Carter
Public Member
Congressional District 1

Dr. Levette Scott
LCMHC
Congressional District 2

Dr. Mark Schwarze
LCMHCS
Congressional District 5

Dr. Vanessa Diggs
Public Member
Congressional District 9



Awareness Months

Awareness is Prevention

December

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month

This month is dedicated to understanding and managing SAD, a type of depression related to the changing seasons.

January

Mental Health Awareness Month

This month is a time to recognize the importance of mental health and to reduce stigma. It's also a time to focus on self-care and building resilience.

February

Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

This month is a time to focus our attention to raising awareness about teen dating violence and promote healthy relationships.



What You Need to Know About Changes for Licensure Requirements!

The North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors would like to remind you that starting July 1, 2025, there are new requirements for individuals aspiring to become Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associates. These changes aim to ensure that our counselors are well-prepared as they begin their careers in the profession. Here's what you need to know about these important updates.

After July 1, 2025, applicants are required to complete CACREP-accredited coursework in (a) introduction to clinical mental health counseling with professional issues and ethics; (b) practicum and clinical mental health internship; and (c) appraisal and assessment of mental health disorders with use and application of the current edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), to include psychopharmacology and differential diagnosis. A minimum of three semester hours or five quarter hours in each of these areas is required. One or more courses in internship are required to meet the standards related to internship of the current edition of CACREP at the time of the receipt of application.

Applicants are required to complete all coursework at a regionally accredited institution of higher education in a program that is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). All coursework must be documented by an official transcript from the university. The official university transcript can come from the same university from which the applicant earned a CACREP-accredited degree. Or, the transcript documenting the coursework can come from a separate regionally accredited institution of higher education in a program that is CACREP-accredited.

Internship experiences must take place in clinical mental health settings. This means aspiring counselors must gain experience in clinical settings that provide substantial opportunities for assessing, appraising, diagnosing, and treating mental health disorders. Some examples of suitable settings include private practices; college counseling centers; community agencies; managed behavioral health care organizations; hospitals; employee assistance programs; specialty treatment centers; vocational rehabilitation centers; marriage, couples, and family practices; addiction counseling sites; and school-based clinical mental health counseling sites.

The type of work performed during these internships is crucial. Aspiring counselors must engage in direct counseling experience (as defined by the Board). This involves activities such as assessing clients to understand their issues, appraising the seriousness of these issues, diagnosing the problems (like identifying depression or anxiety), and providing treatment to help clients improve.

Upon completing their internship and other requirements, applicants must complete the Verification of Graduate Counseling Experience Form. This form is essential for verifying that they have met all the required criteria. The form requires several pieces of information: the name, title, contact information, and signature of the person verifying the experience; the name of the agency where the experience took place; details about the university supervisor overseeing the experience; the name, title, and credentials of the site supervisor; the total hours of individual and group clinical supervision received; whether the experience was a practicum or internship; the beginning and end dates of the experience; and the total number of direct and indirect hours worked, as defined by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Additionally, for those applying on or after July 1, 2025, it is necessary to describe the type of clinical mental health setting and detail the counseling experience in assessing, appraising, diagnosing, and treating mental health disorders. The form is available on the Board's website at www.ncblcmhc.org.

These new requirements are designed to ensure that new counselors have the right kind of experience and training to effectively support and treat individuals with mental health challenges. By working in appropriate settings and performing clinically sound work, future counselors will be better prepared to meet the needs of their clients. If you're planning to become a counselor, make sure you understand and follow these new rules to be well-equipped for your future career and the licensure application process.

Key Takeaways Regarding 2025 Rule Changes

Where Do You Need to Complete Your Graduate Internship Experience?

When you are training to become a counselor, you need to get experience in specific places. These places are called clinical mental health settings. Here are some examples of where you can get this experience. (This is not an exhaustive list, but rather examples of acceptable sites.):

Private Practices
College Counseling Centers
Community Agencies
Managed Behavioral Health Care Organizations
Hospitals
Employee Assistance Programs
Specialty Treatment Centers
Vocational Rehabilitation Centers
Marriage, Couples, and Family Practices
Addiction Counseling Sites
School-Based Counseling Sites

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER: For your graduate internship experience, you need to do certain types of work. This is called “direct counseling experience.” It means you have to do things like: assess, appraise, diagnose, treat.

Practice of Counseling in North Carolina

Pursuant to N.C. General Statutes § 90-330(a)(3), in the state of North Carolina the “practice of counseling” means holding oneself out to the public as a clinical mental health counselor offering counseling services that include, but are not limited to, the following:

Counseling: Assisting individuals, groups, and families through the counseling relationship by evaluating and treating mental disorders and other conditions through the use of a combination of clinical mental health and human development principles, methods, diagnostic procedures, treatment plans, and other psychotherapeutic techniques, to develop an understanding of personal problems, to define goals, and to plan action reflecting the client’s interests, abilities, aptitudes, and mental health needs as these are related to personal-social- emotional concerns, educational progress, and occupations and careers.

Appraisal Activities: administering and interpreting tests for assessment of personal characteristics.

Consulting: interpreting scientific data and providing guidance and personnel services to individuals, groups, or organizations.

Referral Activities: identifying problems requiring referral to other specialists.

Research Activities: designing, conducting, and interpreting research with human subjects.

The “practice of counseling” does not include the facilitation of communication, understanding, reconciliation, and settlement of conflicts by mediators at community mediation centers authorized by G.S. 7A-38.5.

Understanding Business Formation for LCMHC's in North Carolina

If you're a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor looking to form a business entity in North Carolina, it's essential to understand the legal requirements and limitations set by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (NCBLCMHC). Here are key points to consider before establishing your practice.

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding PLLC:

Can an LCMHCA Form a PLLC With an LCSW?

No. As an LCMHCA, you may only form a Professional Corporation (PC), Professional Limited Liability Company (PLLC), or Professional Association (PA). If forming a business entity with another professional, they must be another LCMHCA or Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC). Other professions, such as Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs), cannot be included.

Can I Form a Standard LLC Instead of a PLLC, PA, or PC?

No. North Carolina does not permit Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) for regulated professional services. Any business entity providing licensed mental health services must be a PLLC, PC, or PA.

Which Business Structure Should I Choose?

The choice between PC, PA, or PLLC depends on asset protection and tax considerations. Consult with an accountant or tax professional to determine the best option for your practice.

Professional Corporation (PC) / Professional Association (PA): Corporations providing professional services, regulated by a licensing board.

Professional Limited Liability Company (PLLC): A specialized form of LLC permitted under North Carolina law, governed by an Operating Agreement instead of Articles of Incorporation.

Already Have an LLC in Another State? Here's What You Need to Do:

If you are licensed in North Carolina and want to expand your practice, you must submit:

- * a certificate of Registration Application to the NCBLCMHC.
- * Form PLLC-01 (Application for Certificate of Authority for a Foreign PLLC).
- * proof of good standing from the original state of registration.

Can My Spouse Be a Business Owner If They're Not Licensed?

Yes! At least one incorporator must be a licensed professional, but non-licensed individuals (such as a spouse) can be included as owners.

What If My Business Partner Is an LCSW?

Each profession must apply separately. If you submitted a Certificate of Registration Application that included an LCSW, the NCBLCMHC will only issue the certificate to you. The LCSW must obtain a separate Certificate of Registration from their own licensing board.

For more information, visit the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors website or consult with a legal or tax expert to ensure compliance with state regulations.

Does your license expire this June?

SAVE TIME BY RENEWING ONLINE!

The 2025 license renewal window opens on Jan. 1

Licensure renewal procedures apply to LCMHC Associates, LCMHCs, and LCMHC Supervisors. Renewals may be submitted as early as Jan. 1 of the renewal year.

All licensees shall complete requirements before renewal can be issued.

Deadline for receipt of renewal is June 20 of the renewal year.

You must renew prior to June 30 to avoid a lapse.

[Click Here to Renew Now](#) 

Tip: Add a recurring event to your phone's calendar to remind you when renewals are due.

Be sure to keep your contact information updated to avoid missing important emails from the board.

Accessing your Counselor Gateway

Check the status of your renewal, view your supervision documents, and manage your contact information via the Counselor Gateway Online Portal.

<https://portal.ncblcmhc.org/>

To watch video tutorials on how to navigate the application process, access documents, and complete forms, visit

www.ncblcmhc.org/Resources/Tutorials

The screenshot shows the website interface for the North Carolina Board of Counselors. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Board Info, Licensure, Complaints, Laws & Codes, Resources, and a red Portal button. A search bar is also present. Below the navigation bar, a breadcrumb trail shows 'Home > Video Tutorials'. The main heading is 'Video Tutorials'. A large circular seal of the State of North Carolina is visible on the right side. Below the heading, there is a paragraph: 'In preparation towards your journey for licensure, here are some videos on how to navigate the application process, access documents, and complete forms found in the licensure portal.' Underneath this, the word 'General' is displayed. Three video thumbnails are shown, each with a red play button and a duration: 'Placing requests' (03:23), 'Sending online form requests' (03:15), and 'How to submit requests' (00:34). Each thumbnail also includes a list of topics covered in the video.

Considerations When Choosing Novel Interventions or Strategies With Clients

Dr. Nicole Stargell LCMHC, LSC, NCC, BC-TMH

It's an exciting time to be a professional counselor! In our training, we learn foundational counseling skills and common theories of change, such as person-centered and cognitive-behavioral. Sharing this common foundation, professional counselors often branch out to specialize in different research-based modalities that can be used to address specific client needs. For example, some counselors become certified in Dialectical Behavior Therapy in order to more effectively work with clients who have severe emotional and behavioral concerns. Other counselors might become Registered Play Therapists to better support young clients with their mental health needs. It is our responsibility to ensure that the interventions we choose are ethical and provide a reasonable promise for success.

When a counselor wants to address a new set of client concerns they have not previously treated, they should take the necessary steps to become competent in that area. This might involve a combination of continued education, consultation, supervised professional practice, and additional registration or certification. Counselors often need experience working with a specific client population before they can become competent in that area. Supervision is an excellent way to ensure a counselor is doing no harm while gaining experience, training, and expertise with a novel intervention or strategy. Even fully licensed counselors can seek supervision when expanding their skill set.

Counselors should research the effectiveness of novel interventions and determine the level of training required to use such interventions. As graduate students, we have access to our university library, which provides access to many peer-reviewed journals to assist with this task. One way to access peer-reviewed information after graduation might be through your university's alumni association. Sometimes, alumni membership provides access to the university library resources.

Another way to access peer-reviewed information is through membership in professional counseling associations. The American Counseling Association publishes our *Code of Ethics*, and they also publish several counseling journals: <https://www.counseling.org/publications/counseling-journals>.

As well, the American Mental Health Counseling Association offers peer-reviewed publications for counselor professional development: <https://www.amhca.org/events/publications>.

Additionally, counselors can attend professional conferences hosted by our national professional associations or any of their divisions or branches. It is the individual counselor's responsibility to determine when they have adequate competence to use any novel intervention or strategy that is within our scope of practice.

Some recent approaches for addressing specific client issues have become the focus of increasing research. For example, the National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been looking into the use of psychedelic-assisted therapy for PTSD (National Center for PTSD, 2025). Another example is the use of animal-assisted therapy to enhance traditional therapy (Animal Behavior Institute, 2023). Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors operate within their scope of practice at all times and grow their competency in intentional and ethical ways.

Although the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (NCBLCMHC) does not take a position or provide guidance on any one counseling approach or intervention, it does uphold and support the highest standards for the ethical and professional practice of counseling. In accordance with the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014) Code of Ethics, we emphasize the importance of using a comprehensive approach that includes understanding the scope of practice, adhering to ethical guidelines, and leveraging experience, supervision, and ongoing training.

A.1.c. Counseling Plans

Counselors and their clients work jointly in devising counseling plans that offer reasonable promise of success and are consistent with the abilities, temperament, developmental level, and circumstances of clients. The scope of practice serves as a safeguard, ensuring that clients receive services aligned with the counselor's expertise. The following scope of practice is outlined in Article 24 of the Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors Act (1983).

§ 90-330. Practice of Counseling

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

(3) The “practice of counseling” means holding oneself out to the public as a clinical mental health counselor offering counseling services that include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Counseling. – Assisting individuals, groups, and families through the counseling relationship by evaluating and treating mental disorders and other conditions through the use of a combination of clinical mental health and human development principles, methods, diagnostic procedures, treatment plans, and other psychotherapeutic techniques, to develop an understanding of personal problems, to define goals, and to plan action reflecting the client's interests, abilities, aptitudes, and mental health needs as these are related to personal-social-emotional concerns, educational progress, and occupations and careers.

b. Appraisal Activities. – Administering and interpreting tests for assessment of personal characteristics.

c. Consulting. – Interpreting scientific data and providing guidance and personnel services to individuals, groups, or organizations.

d. Referral Activities. – Identifying problems requiring referral to other specialists.

e. Research Activities. – Designing, conducting, and interpreting research with human subjects.

Continual professional development through training is essential for maintaining competence in an evolving field. The client's best interest must always be the primary consideration in clinical practice.

C.2.a. Boundaries of Competence

Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience.

C.2.b. New Specialty Areas of Practice

Counselors practice in specialty areas new to them only after appropriate education, training, and supervised experience. While developing skills in new specialty areas, counselors take steps to ensure the competence of their work and protect others from possible harm.

These ethical principles guide counselors in selecting appropriate approaches and interventions, always prioritizing the client's well-being and therapeutic outcomes. This ensures that counselors can effectively use various theories, interventions, and approaches in the best interest of their clients. Counselors should be aware of their limitations and seek consultation, supervision, training, or referrals when a client's needs fall outside their scope of practice.

References

American Counseling Association. (2014). 2014 ACA Code of Ethics.

<https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ethics/2014-aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

Animal Behavior Institute. (2023). Program overview. Retrieved from

<https://www.animaledu.com/program-overview>

Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors Act, N.C.G.S. § 90-330 (1983 & rev. 2019).

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Laws/GeneralStatuteSections/Chapter90>

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). (2025).

MDMA-assisted therapy for PTSD.

United States Department of Veteran Affairs (USDVA). Retrieved from

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand_tx/mdma_assisted_therapy.asp

Don't Miss Important Messages About Your License!

Reminder to LCMHSs!

Quarterly Supervision Reports (QSRs) **MUST** be submitted in a timely manner. Doing so helps to ensure that supervision is properly documented and that your supervision contract was approved.

QSRs cannot be submitted by the supervisee; they must be submitted by the supervisor.

Quarterly report due dates are:

Q1 (Jan. 1–March 31) report must be submitted by April 30

Q2 (April 1–June 30) report must be submitted by July 31

Q3 (July 1–Sept. 30)..... report must be submitted by Oct. 31

Q4 (Oct. 1–Dec. 31) report must be submitted by Jan. 31

The Board does not require the submission of hours on QSRs.

All hours are to be reported to the Board on Final Supervision Reports (FSRs).

Note:

All supervisors are required to submit QSRs and FSRs. Parties agree to submit these documents as a part of the supervision contract submitted to the Board. These documents must not be withheld for any reason. Issues that may arise during the supervision relationship must be reported on QSRs and submitted to the Board.

What's New

2025 Renewal Clarifications for LCMHC Supervisors

Currently, LCMHC Supervisors must submit an additional ten (10) contact hours of continuing education focused on clinical supervision. This is in addition to the required forty (40) hours, bringing the total to fifty (50) hours of continuing education.

Starting with the 2025 renewal cycle and moving forward, LCMHC Supervisors will only need to submit a total of forty (40) contact hours. However, of those forty hours, ten (10) must be related to clinical supervision. There are no changes to the approved providers, content areas, types of activities, or documentation requirements.

What Has Changed?

Previously, LCMHC Supervisors had to complete forty (40) contact hours plus ten (10) additional hours specific to supervision (for a total of 50). Beginning with 2025 renewals, this is reduced to forty (40) hours total, with ten (10) hours specifically focused on supervision.

What Has Not Changed?

- approved continuing education providers
- required content areas for CEUs
- types of activities to meet requirements for supervision
- documentation requirements to demonstrate supervision has occurred
- requirement to meet the minimum continuing education in order to renew

Mark Your Calendars 2025

April 17–18

Board Meeting

June 6

Board Hearing

Please visit

ncblcmhc.org/boardinfo/calendar

to view the full board calendar.

Just for Fun!

Puzzles are a healthy way to relieve stress, reduce anxiety, improve focus, and relax.

Mindfulness Word Find

Find 10 mindfulness-themed words in the puzzle below.

Words can go in any direction (horizontal, vertical, diagonal).

D M R F W E K I Y W Q C Y P V
T W G E S T I L L N E S S F D
O G V Y N T A I Q F W V I O T
N F B M G N W B A L A N C E N
O Z G Z R T A H K F O C U S M
J C L Q A M R N S Y V S B F E
E X C J T Y E N R E M P R M D
T O I T I C N Z V A R P E T I
A E Y P T A E N H T E C A C T
U J A Y U L S C C G F G T U A
D G N U D M S B Q K L N H J T
H S E K E Y C B X A E Q E M I
N Y E S Z Q F D P E C P P M O
P L J L F Z B B C O T W V E N
K K E A X E P W P R E S E N T

Good Luck!

WORDS TO FIND

- BREATHE • FOCUS • CALM • GRATITUDE • AWARENESS • PRESENT
- MEDITATION • STILLNESS • REFLECT • BALANCE



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