

**Commentary from the Licensing Board:  
Using Psychological Assistants and Psychometrists**  
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Chapter Five of the State Board of Examiners' Rules ("Licensure Rules") is defined as the Supplemental Code of Conduct, which addresses areas not included in the APA Ethics Code (incorporated as Chapter Four of the Licensure Rules). According to Chapter 510-5-.02 (Definitions), psychologists can delegate and supervise psychological services for three categories of individuals: (1) trainees, (2) employees, and (3) individuals who are also employed by the same institutional employer. Supervision requirements generally fall within one of two types of settings.

**Training settings** involve supervisees who are pre-doctoral interns or post-doctoral fellows. A training setting may include "a hospital, accredited school, university, consulting firm, public agency, public or private organization, or public or private practice" (Chapter 510-2-.05 [2] [c]). Because supervision of pre-doctoral interns and post-doctoral fellows has been addressed elsewhere (Campbell & Webb, 2004; Doverspike, Campbell, Meck, Sauls, & Webb, 2009), the present article addresses only supervision in employment and independent practice settings.

**Employment settings** involve supervisees who are employed by either a psychologist (e.g., the psychologist's practice) or by an institutional employer (e.g., an agency). An employee is someone who receives an IRS Form W-2 from either the psychologist or from an institutional employer by whom the psychologist is also employed. An employee would not be an IRS Form 1099 independent contractor. Regardless of whether supervision occurs in an institutional setting or by a psychologist in independent practice, all fees for services shall be paid directly to the institution or, in the case of psychologists in independent practice, directly to the supervising psychologist.<sup>1</sup> Client/patient fees would never be made payable to a psychological assistant or psychometrist. Psychologists who pay psychological assistants or psychometrists as independent contractors are aiding the illegal practice of psychology without a license.

**Delegation to and Supervision of Supervisees of Psychological Services (Chapter 510-5-.06 [(3)])**

(a) Psychologists shall not delegate professional responsibilities to a person who is not qualified to provide such services. [For example, Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) are not qualified or personally competent to perform psychological testing, and to allow them to do so in their capacity as LPCs is considered aiding illegal practice.] Psychologists delegate to supervisees, with the appropriate level of supervision, only those responsibilities that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently and ethically based on the supervisee's education, training, and experience.

(b) Psychologists shall not delegate responsibilities or accept supervisory responsibilities for work which they are not qualified and personally competent to perform. Psychologists must retain full, complete, and ultimate authority and responsibility for the professional acts of supervisees.

- (c) The supervisee must have appropriate education and training, including training in ethical issues, to perform the delegated functions. The psychologist is responsible for determining the competency of the supervisee and will not assign or allow the supervisee to undertake tasks beyond the scope of the supervisee's training and/or competency. The psychologist is also responsible for providing the supervisee with specific instructions regarding the limits of his/her role as supervisee.
- (d) The supervisee must fully inform the patient or client receiving services of his or her role as supervisee and the right of the patient or client to confer with the supervising psychologist with regard to any aspect of the services, care, treatment, evaluation, or tests being performed.
- (e) When clinical psychological services are rendered, the psychologist must take part in the intake process, must personally make the diagnosis when a diagnosis is required, and must personally approve and co-sign a treatment plan for each patient or client. The psychologist must meet personally with the supervisee on a continuous and regular basis concerning each patient or client and must review the treatment record, including progress notes, on a regular basis as appropriate to the task(s). The psychologist must provide a **minimum** of one hour of supervision for every 20 hours of face-to-face clinical contact. The psychologist shall not take primary supervisory responsibility for more than three supervisees engaged in psychological services concurrently without Board approval.
- (f) The selection and interpretation of psychological tests shall only be made by the psychologist. The psychologist must personally interview the patient when a diagnosis is made or is requested. In any written report, including psychological evaluations, the psychologist must approve and sign the report. When the supervisee does not participate in the actual writing of a report, but does administer and/or score psychological tests, the supervisee is not required to sign the report, but his or her name must be listed as the person who participated in the collection of the data in the report. When the supervisee personally participates in the writing of any report, then both the psychologist and the supervisee must sign the report.
- (g) When the delegation and supervision of psychological services is being conducted for training purposes towards licensure, psychologists must comply with the Rules regarding internships, fellowships, and/or postdoctoral supervised work experience.

### **Aiding Illegal Practice (Chapter 510-5-.10 [1] [b])**

Licensure Rules specify categories of individuals with whom supervision cannot be lawfully provided. Pursuant to Chapter 510-5-.06(3), as discussed previously, psychologists "shall not delegate professional responsibilities" to persons who are not qualified to provide psychological services on the basis of their education, training, and experience. In addition to this prohibition, Chapter 510-5-.10 (1) (b) specifies four other categories of persons with whom supervision may not be conducted:

Licensed psychologists may not supervise or employ as an assistant, or in any other capacity, an individual who has (1) voluntarily surrendered his/her license to practice psychology in Georgia or in any other state, (2) been disciplined by the licensing Board, (3) been disciplined by any other lawful licensing authority, or (4) been convicted of a felony, and/or is under criminal probation. It should be noted that Rule 510-5-.10 (1)(b) may be waived or modified by the Board, in its discretion, upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances.

*Readers who have questions about board rules may to submit their questions to the Executive Director, Georgia State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217-3858. To ensure uniformity of response, board opinions are formulated at monthly board meetings and are provided in writing.*

### **Footnotes**

1. There is an exception in the case of post-doctoral fellows, for whom fees for services may be paid directly to the agency or supervisor or, where appropriate, directly to the post-doctoral fellow. Although fees may be paid directly to post-doctoral fellows, in neither training settings nor employment settings shall client/patient fees be paid directly to pre-doctoral interns, psychological assistants, or psychometrists.

### **References**

Campbell, E., & Webb, C. (2004). Commentary from the Licensing Board. *Georgia Psychologist*, 58(1), 7.

Doverspike, W. F., Campbell, L., Meck, D., Sauls, M., & Webb, C. (2009). Commentary from the Licensing Board: Clinical Supervision in Training and Practice Settings. *Georgia Psychologist*, 63(4), 7-9.

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