

TSBEP Newsletter

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LSSPs UNSUNG HEROS

By Catherine Bernell Estrada, Public Member
Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists

For the past six years, I have served as a public member on this Board. During my Board tenure, my eyes have gradually opened to the realities of the mental health system in Texas as well as to the challenges our licensees face.

I take a cautious sigh, as another school year is about to begin. A certain trepidation always follows me from August to May, as one too many school shootings are splashed across CNN.

Increasingly, my respect for licensed specialists in school psychology (LSSPs) has grown. Put simply, LSSPs have a hard job. From my perspective they walk a tight rope between our rules, TEA rules, and special education laws. They navigate through school district personnel who really do not understand the nature of what they do and perhaps more difficult they work not just with mentally ill children but also with their families. Their workloads seem daunting.

We all know that Texas ranks consistently 49th out of 50 states in mental health services. We all know mental health services for adults and those living in rural areas are dire. We all know that the real crisis in mental health is our children.

I have always found LSSPs to be compassionate, humble, highly trained, dedicated, and for the most part unnoticed. To all of our LSSPs, I wish to personally thank you for providing crucial services to the children of our state.

Fee Increases Beginning October 2007

The 80th Texas Legislature mandated a 2% increase for all classified state employees beginning September 2007 and an additional 2% increase in September 2008. The Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists is obligated to collect additional revenue to cover the increased funding to this agency, specifically to fund the salary increase for classified state employees who work for the Board.

Therefore, beginning October 1, 2007, the Board has raised all renewal fees by \$2 per year and all application for licensure fees by \$5.

Amended Rule: 465.17 Therapy and Counseling

Important amended to rules not included in July 2007 Rulebook.

465.17 Therapy and Counseling.

(a) Imbalances of Power.

(1) Licensees who engage in therapy or counseling recognize the actual or perceived power or undue influence they hold over current and former patients and clients.

(2) Licensees are presumed to have power and influence over former therapy or counseling patients or clients.

(3) Licensees do not engage in sexual relationships with, employ, enter into business with or otherwise exploit any former patient or client over whom they have actual or perceived power or undue influence created through a therapeutic relationship.

(b) Treatment plans.

(1) Licensees create specific written treatment plans that include, at a minimum, agreed upon goals of the treatment, the techniques to be used, and the tentative duration of the treatment for any therapy or counseling that they provide.

(2) Licensees explain the treatment plan to all recipients of the therapy or counseling before commencing the services.

(3) Licensees alter and document the alteration in the treatment plan when clinically indicated.

(4) Licensees confer with and obtain consent from the patient, or client or other

recipient(s) of services ~~recipient(s)~~ concerning significant alterations in the treatment plan in accordance with Board rule 465.11(a)(2) ~~465.11(b)~~.
