



Positions Statements Related to Licensed Professional Counselors Issued by the Joint Board of Marriage & Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work

IS THERE A CODE OF ETHICS FOR LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS?

While Wisconsin laws governing professional counselors do not have a formal code of ethics for Licensed Professional Counselors, there is a code of conduct which can be found in [MPSW 20.02](#).

Revised December 18, 2013

CAN ANYONE CALL HIM OR HERSELF A COUNSELOR AND PRACTICE COUNSELING IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN?

The use of the title and practice of professional counseling are protected in the state of Wisconsin. No person may use the title or otherwise represent him or herself to the public as a licensed professional counselor unless licensed as a LPC or LPC in training as set forth in [s. 457.04\(6\), Wis. Stats.](#)

No person may engage in the practice of professional counseling as defined in [s. 457.01\(6\), Wis. Stats.](#), unless licensed as a LPC or LPC in training. See [s. 457.04\(6\), Wis. Stats.](#)

Other exceptions to the use of the term “counselor” can be found in [s.457.02 Wis. Stats.](#)

Revised December 18, 2013

WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING?

The definition of professional counseling in Wisconsin can be found in [s. 457.01\(6\) Wis. Stats.](#)

Revised December 18, 2013

HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR?

Please see Wis. Stat. §§ 457.12 and 457.13 which contain the requirements for obtaining a “Professional counselor license” and a “Professional counselor training license.” Additional information can also be found on this website at Professional Counselor – Licenses/Permits/Registrations. For information regarding Provider Status (necessary in order to bill insurance companies for your service with clients) you will need to contact the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/>).

Revised December 18, 2013

ARE LPC'S REQUIRED TO CARRY MALPRACTICE INSURANCE?

Licensed Professional Counselors, Clinical Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists are required to have professional liability insurance. These requirements are outlined in s. [457.24](#), Stat. and s. [MPSW 1.10](#), Wis. Admin code. Exceptions exist for work performed by licensees who are employed in their licensed capacity as employees of federal, state or local governmental agencies.

Revised December 18, 2013

WHAT REPORTING OBLIGATIONS DO I HAVE?

1. If you have reasonable cause to suspect that a child you have seen in the course of your professional duties has been abused or neglected, or if you have reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen by you in the course of your professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur, you shall report such knowledge to the appropriate authorities. See Wis. Stat. § 48.981 for further details.
2. If you have reasonable cause to suspect that a client you have seen in the course of your professional duties is a victim of sexual contact by a therapist, you must ask the client if s/he wants you to report such contact. See Wis. Stat. § 940.22 for further details.
3. Any organization or individual that employs a professional counselor must report to the examining board any adverse or disciplinary action, relating to the practice of professional counseling that terminates, suspends or restricts the professional counselor's employment or contract. See Wis. Stat. § 457.25 for further details.

Revised December 18, 2013

CAN LICENSEES TREAT AODA CLIENTS?

Wisconsin Stat. § 457.02(5m) disallows licensees from treating alcohol or substance dependency or abuse as a specialty unless the individual is a certified substance abuse counselor, clinical supervisor, or prevention specialist under Wis. Stat. § 440.88, or if such individual meets the requirements set forth under Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 1.09 (Alcohol and Drug Counseling).

Revised December 18, 2013

ARE LICENSED COUNSELORS FROM OTHER STATES ABLE TO PROVIDE DISTANCE COUNSELING TO CLIENTS IN WISCONSIN?

The practice protections provided in s. 455 and s.457 require Wisconsin licensure for those providing services in Wisconsin (including telephonically). Therefore, unless a therapist or counselor holds a Wisconsin license, they would be unable to practice in the state.

Revised December 18, 2013

WHAT DO ALL THOSE INITIALS BEHIND THE COUNSELOR'S NAMES MEAN?

In Wisconsin, the following designations are used to represent the type of licensure an individual may hold under the MPSW Joint Board:

LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor)

LPCIT (Licensed Professional Counselor In Training)

LMFT (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist)

LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)

CISW (Certified Independent Social Worker)

CSW (Certified Social Worker)

CAPSW (Certified Advanced Practice Social Worker)

SWTC (Social Worker Training Certificate)

In addition to the Wisconsin licensing designations, many licensees may also have other certifications, credentials, and membership affiliations.

Revised December 18, 2013