



Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology

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Dear Registrant:

Welcome to the most recent update from NSBEP. In this format of communication with registrants, the Board strives to provide updates on subjects of interest to registrants of the Board.

In this update:

- Registration Certificates
- Notes from NSBEP: Issues that can arise when consulting with a lawyer
- Clarification regarding Telepsychology
- NSBEP Website
- Assisting with Supervision, Oral Examinations and Transfer Interviews

Registration Certificates

The Board has received feedback from some Registered Psychologists regarding its decision to eliminate the inserts that have been placed inside of the circular window of the registration certificates each year. Information about this decision was announced in July 2015 and provided again at renewal time. If you would like to access the rationale and other information about this decision, please feel free to [click here](#). The Board previously advised Registrants that they could reverse the yellow insert to fill in the circular hole of the certificate, or they could order a new certificate for the current cost of \$15. A new certificate would not contain the circular hole, and would be signed by the current Registrar only.

The Board has considered this matter further and is offering to provide one replacement certificate at no charge, if a registrant wishes to have a new certificate. To order a replacement certificate, please send your request by email to NSBEP.

Please note that more than one certificate can still be ordered and the usual fee of \$15 will apply to each additional certificate, beyond the first replacement issued.

Notes from NSBEP: Issues that can arise when consulting with a lawyer
Allan R. Wilson, Ph.D., Registrar

Previously the Board was contacted by a psychologist about a number of issues that can arise when consulting with a lawyer. This registrant and his colleagues have, over time, encountered a variety of difficulties while providing such consultations. These difficulties can create a dilemma for the psychologist and introduce tension into the relationship between the psychologist and the lawyer. Examples:

1. After referring a client for a psychological assessment, a lawyer requests that he psychologist send to her office the "complete file" so that the lawyer can determine whether or not to "request a report".

2. A lawyer requests that a psychologist see an individual to determine whether the person has suffered psychological harm as a result of an accident. The lawyer wants to talk with the psychologist following his "assessment", but prior to writing any report. The lawyer may or may not then commission a report.

3. A lawyer requests that a psychologist review a client's medical file and determine whether or not a psychological assessment may be in the client's interest. If the psychologist believes it would be worthwhile, the lawyer will then request the same psychologist to see the client and complete an assessment.

4. A lawyer requests that a psychologist review a client's medical file and offer an opinion about whether a previously completed psychological assessment is adequate. If it is not, the lawyer will request that the psychologist (who has reviewed the report) complete a new assessment.

Situations such as those described above can be difficult for the psychologist to resolve and often result in frustration for the lawyers involved. The impression seems to be that such requests may violate professional standards for the psychologist, while the lawyers involved do not see such requests as problematic.

The Board asked NSBEP legal counsel to review these scenarios and offer an opinion about whether there are any problems, from a legal point of view, with a lawyer making such requests to a psychologist. In addition, legal counsel was asked to suggest how a psychologist might best deal with such requests when consulting with a lawyer.

Legal counsel indicated that there are no legal concerns with the manner with which lawyers are retaining and using psychologists in the scenarios described above. It was suggested that perhaps the best way avoid difficulties and misunderstandings when providing such consultations is for the psychologist and the lawyer to clearly define what they understand the retainer to involve and for the psychologist to be clear in communicating what they are comfortable or not comfortable doing. As with many similar situations, beginning work with a clear understanding about what is expected by both parties involved may be the best practice.

One of the ways to deal with complicated ethical issues is through the informed consent

process. Psychologists who choose to perform work for a third-party payer must ensure that they establish informed consent at the onset of that work in a way that fully informs the client of possible ramifications set out by the third party agreement or legal requirements. If a psychologist feels that he/she cannot agree to the possible consequences that result from completing such work, he/she must seriously consider in advance whether to pursue such work.

Clarification regarding Telepsychology

Psychologists planning to engage in the practice of telepsychology should be familiar with the Model Standards for Telepsychology Service that were developed by the Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations (ACPRO), adopted by NSBEP, and issued to registrants as an Advisory for Psychological Practice. These standards include making sure that one is legally able to provide services in the jurisdiction where the client is located. Please note that such authorization should be sought from the jurisdiction where the client is located. Whether the client was originally a Nova Scotia resident or is a student who attends university or is employed part of the year in Nova Scotia does not change this obligation. The legal issue is that the client is currently located in another jurisdiction, where they would be receiving services from the psychologist via telepsychology. The NSBEP cannot control how another jurisdiction would view this practice, but in most cases, at least in North America, psychologists providing service to the client would be considered to be practicing in the jurisdiction where the client is located. The Board's website has a dedicated section containing several resources pertaining to telepsychology. All registrants are encouraged to review this information.

NSBEP Website

Registrants are always encouraged to make use of the website to keep track of any developments and to perform various tasks. For instance, the website provides access to various legislation, standards and additional guidelines NSBEP has established to direct practice along with news releases. We also have different versions of "Frequently Asked Questions" to serve the various requirements of visitors to our site.

Additionally, the NSBEP Directory of Psychologists is available from the website. Such information can be helpful for the public and other professionals. Please ensure that your information is accurate.

The Board has recently launched an online application system allowing applicants to complete their portion of the application process online. This helps to reduce costs for the applicant and speeds up the application process. As well, this enhancement makes it easier for the Board to update the database when applicants become registrants.

The Board site offers a Registrant Portal, which allows registrants to perform a variety of self-serve functions. In addition to renewing your registration, you can update your contact information or Psychological Practice Profile at any time.

You can also access a Confirmation of Registration document that you can save to your computer and/or print off if you wish to share it with others to verify your registration, e.g., an employer, insurance companies, agencies, etc. This document confirms that a psychologist's registration has been renewed and states the current year of registration.

You can return to this portal at any time in future, if you wish to obtain another

Confirmation of Registration, update your contact information or psychological practice profile, or even pay a miscellaneous fee (e.g., paying an oral exam fee, reinstatement fee, etc.).

To get started with any of the self-serve functions, visit nsbep.org and click on "Registrant Login" in the upper right hand screen.

If you have any suggestions about how we can improve the website or provide additional information, please feel free to contact Matthew Wagner, Assistant Registrar:

Supervision, Oral Examinations and Transfer Interviews

The NSBEP extends sincere appreciation to all registrants who give their time, knowledge and experience in acting as a Board Supervisor or assisting with Oral Examinations and Transfer Interview Committees.

In keeping with Standard IV.4 of the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists, working with the Board in these capacities provides an excellent way to contribute to the continuing education and the professional and scientific growth of self and colleagues.

Oral Examinations & Transfer Interviews

Oral Examinations are conducted as candidates take the final steps towards Registration. The Oral Examination provides an opportunity for a face-to-face interaction between examiners and examinees to discuss areas of practice, professional behaviour and ethical dilemmas, and to assess the examinee's understanding of the core competencies required for psychological practice, as well as the meaning of registration and the position of psychology as a profession.

Transfer Interviews are held for psychologists who are registered in another jurisdiction and are eligible to transfer based on their full registration in another jurisdiction and their meeting certain criteria. These interviews do not result in a pass or fail but do focus on ethical practice and local jurisprudence issues. At times, the Transfer Interview Committee might recommend that a condition be added to a psychologist's registration. An example of a condition would be completing supervision for a period of time.

Supervision

The purposes of candidate register supervision are to:

1. To monitor the performance of candidates in the core competency areas to ensure standards are being met;
2. To provide opportunities for candidates to further develop their skills, knowledge, professional attitudes, and sound professional judgment.

Psychologists can act as a Supervisor for the entire duration of the candidacy period or they may choose to do so for a limited period of time.

As mentioned, there are times when supervision might be required for a registered psychologist. For instance, if a candidate has passed an oral exam with conditions, they may be registered with a condition requiring him/her to undergo an additional period of

supervision to remediate concerns identified by the oral exam committee. In some instances, supervision may also be recommended to a psychologist who has transferred from another jurisdiction.

Those who have been a Registered Psychologist for two years are eligible to volunteer to serve as a NSBEP Supervisor.

The NSBEP encourages psychologists to consider becoming involved with the work of the Board. To obtain more information or to volunteer for one of these roles, please contact Matthew Wagner, Assistant Registrar.

Sincerely,

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