

Missouri Mental Health Counselors Association

<http://www.mmhca.com/index.html>



Legislative win for LPCs: Missouri has joined the Counseling Compact!

The counseling compact will grant counselors privilege to practice in other states that have also joined the compact. Applications are expected to open in early 2024. For more information about the counseling compact visit counselingcompact.org.

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Join now! Many benefits
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Join MMHCA
today!



Student Services and Membership

By Megan Bearden

Hello! My name is Megan Bearden. I serve as the student member chair for MMHCA. I wanted to share about our organization and the benefits to graduate students. Whether students are just beginning the journey as counselors-in-training or are ready to graduate, MMHCA is here to support students. MMHCA is the state chapter of the national organization American Mental Health Counselors Association. We are the only organization in the state dedicated specifically to serving mental health counselors. We focus on advocacy for the profession, training and continuing education opportunities, and networking with other professionals throughout the state.

For students specifically we offer additional supports. First, students get a discounted membership rate of \$30. This provides students access to a variety of benefits. We host an annual legislative day to help students gain experience advocating for the counseling profession while networking with others from across the state. Student members also receive a discount at our annual conference. MMHCA will also be providing a continuously updated list of LPCs who have completed a supervisor training, which allows them to be approved supervisors for PLPCs in Missouri. This information will be accessible for student members only. In this members only section, there will also be access to recorded trainings, workshops with the Missouri licensure board, and advocacy tips.

Additionally, I am happy to be a resource for students and schools, connecting them to our organization or any additional needs they have while developing into future counselors. Please visit our website for more information or email me with any questions. MMHCA is here to support you!

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Benefits for all members of MMHCA

- Annual Conference and Continuing Ed discounts!
- Save \$\$\$ through unified dues program
 - 20% discount on AMHCA and MMHCA
- Networking opportunities!
- Successful track record on advocacy efforts - be an important part of change in Missouri!
- Collaborate with professionals on resources and more!



Fall 2023

Special Topic: Informed Consent

By Christopher E. Anderson, CRADC, LPC, Ph.D,
ACS

Clients access counseling services for a variety of reasons. As varied as these can be, one thing is universal. It can be a major decision on the part of clients to enter counseling and deal with difficult issues. We, as professional counselors, are given the responsibility to fully inform our clients of what counseling is and what it is not. Here is where informed consent comes in.

According to the LPC code of ethics, “a counselor shall explain and document elements of informed consent.” In short, clients need to be fully informed, from the first session, what is involved in professional counseling. Imagine how we would feel if we went to see a provider of any kind and be uninformed of what was going to happen. We certainly wouldn’t want our clients to feel that way.

At the onset of services, clients need to be fully informed of what we can do, what we won’t do, and what we cannot do. Providing a brief written biography of our education and experience can be valuable information. Clients also need to be made aware of what is being asked of them. Clients need to know therapy is work and it is an equal partnership with both parties putting forth equal effort.

Since counseling is a goal directed process, establishing specific goals the client wishes to accomplish is important from the onset of treatment. This is where a wellness plan or treatment plan comes in. Working with the client to develop specific goals and interventions is crucial. Without a specific plan, how can progress (or lack of) be assessed?



There are, of course, other things that go into informed consent (confidentiality, fees, attendance policies, after hours coverage). A good discussion (and documentation in their file) of informed consent will give clients the power and information to make good decisions about entering into a counseling relationship. This also will need to be done throughout services as needed.

This information may be a review for a lot of you. Sometimes, we get bogged down with our responsibilities and lose focus. I have not always done as good a job giving clients informed consent as I should have done. Sometimes, I think it’s a good idea to revisit just what we are asking our clients to do and what our services involve. A good, informed consent discussion can help us do this. I know we want to use our techniques and “get in there” with helping the client. Paying attention to the issues mentioned above can help ground us. It can also help every new client feel good about the decision they are making when we are given the privilege of working with them

2023 Annual Conference Recap

This year we enjoyed a beautiful weekend in Camdenton, MO for our annual conference. Over 60 LPCs, PLPCs, and graduate counseling students gathered to learn, grow, and connect at our conference. This year’s theme, entitled Healing from Within, highlighted the resilient nature of our profession as well as how to care for ourselves as we continue serving our clients. We hope to see you at our annual conference in Fall 2024.

Counselor Hot Topics & Issues: Should Counselors have mandated time frames connected to client intake?

By Rebecca Padgett, MA/MS - LPC, NCC, MSL

As of May 2023, it's estimated over 160 million Americans live in regions where there is a shortage of counselors lending opportunities for extended waitlists and service delays. Unfortunately, the delay in treatment, shortage for counselors, and increasing demand for mental health care have created a triangulation of adversities within the industry itself. These service delays are now catching the attention of local legislatures and organizational boards Nationwide. In October 2021, The State of California endorsed Senate Bill 221 which addresses time frames connected to mental and physical health services. According to Section 5.E, nonurgent appointments for mental health care should be provided within 10 business days of the requested appointment. These time frames are increasing pressure on the provider to provide services even if their clinical practice and/or clinicians are already full. According to the MMHCA 2023 survey only 16% of counselors reported they can provide services without a waitlist. Some would argue that the passing of bills like Senate Bill 221 are contradictory to the counseling code of ethics which support providers understanding their boundaries and provider limitations. Others would argue that clients who are not serviced timely are also exposed to conditions of harm to their already elevated mental health needs.

As this topic continues to grow across the Nation, what do you think? Should counselors have time frames connected to treatment intake dates based on State Laws? Send your thoughts and responses to Rebecca Padgett, Public Policy & Issues Chair at rpadgett.gwc@gmail.com.

Resource Links:

[Bill Text - SB-221 Health care coverage: timely access to care.](#)

[Understanding the U.S. Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage | Commonwealth Fund](#)



Upcoming Supervision Training

Interested in supervising PLPCs in the state of Missouri? Check out our upcoming training, November 3 from 9am to 4:30pm via Zoom. Register on our website [here](#). In this workshop you will:

- Consider what ethical codes and principles guide the practice of supervision
- Get a simple review of state laws as apply to supervision
- Read about, discuss, and apply researched practices in distance supervision
- Distinguish between administrative and clinical supervision
- Learn effective qualities of and models of clinical supervision
- Identify your own challenges in supervision
- Practice skills of clinical supervision