

PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNICIANS' ACTIVITIES And THEIR REPRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC

PURPOSE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNICIAN:

The Psychological Technician is a "technician" for the psychologist rather than a "clinician." The difference between the two is with regard to the level of allowed decision making: procedural versus discretionary. Discretionary decision making is reserved for the psychologist (i.e., clinician) and non-discretionary decision making (i.e., procedural) is appropriate for the psychological technician. The psychological technician **ASSISTS** the psychologist and is **NOT** independent in the provision of services. Discretionary decision making involves independence and is not appropriate for the psychological technician. (See Psychologists Licensing Act and Rules of the Board for further information.)

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES:

When applications to hire a psychological technician are reviewed by the Board, the activities and services to be provided are carefully studied to ensure they are **NOT** discretionary in nature. The Board also reviews whether the individual has had training related to those activities and services.

INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES:

Activities and services consistently rejected by the Board involve discretionary decision making. The following are noninclusive examples:

- * Administration, scoring, interpretation of projectives.
- * Personality assessment.
- * Clinical interviews.
- * Mental status examinations.
- * Individual, family, or group counseling/psychotherapy.
- * Developing treatment/intervention plans.
- * Writing psychological reports.
- * Writing evaluative, rather than factual/descriptive, statements in progress notes.

QUESTIONED ACTIVITIES:

The Board frequently asks for clarification of activities and services when the psychologist's intent is not clear regarding the type of decision making level assigned. Greater specificity on the application usually would not have resulted in a delay. Noninclusive examples of questioned activities follow:

- * Administer psychological tests¹
- * Conduct psychometric assessment¹
- * Perform psychoeducational assessment¹
- * Administer neuropsychological tests¹
- * Provide consultation to parent/teachers²
- * Provide evaluation feedback to clients²

¹ Question: Does this include projective techniques, mental status interviews, and/or tests requiring extensive training in qualitative techniques?

² Question: Is the technician simply reporting results or recommendations prepared by the psychologist? Are consumers informed of how to access the psychologist for clarification?

ACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES:

Activities and services frequently approved by the Board, assuming the individual has received training in the area, include:

- * Administration and scoring of objective tests (e.g. intelligence, adaptive behavior, etc.).
- * Conducting highly structured history intakes/interviews.
- * Assisting the psychologist in developing behavioral interventions/plans.
- * Collecting data relevant to behavior interventions/plans.
- * Conducting structured behavioral observations.
- * Implementing/monitoring structured behavioral management programs (e.g., behavior modification).
- * Implementing structured social skills/psychoeducational programs (e.g., STEP).
- * Conducting structured cognitive rehabilitative/retraining programs (e.g., REHABIT).
- * Assisting the psychologist in counseling sessions.
- * Participation in IHP/IEP meetings conveying the psychologist's recommendations (only if approved under the QMRP exemption).
- * Documentation in client/patient chart of date, length and nature of service (i.e., descriptive/factual progress notes).

REPRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC:

Psychological technicians must **NOT** represent themselves, in any manner, as an independent practitioner and it is the employing psychologist's responsibility to ensure it does not occur. Additionally, the psychologist has a duty to inform consumers of the psychological technician's qualifications and functions.

The psychological technician's name must **NOT** appear in the following:

- * Yellow Pages under "Psychologists"
- * Business White Pages
- * Letterhead
- * Business Cards
- * Announcements
- * Office Directory
- * Entry Office Door
- * Psychological Report signature line

The psychological technician's name **MAY** appear in the following:

- * Office Door within office complex listing name, degree, and title (i.e., psychological technician)
- * Psychological Report if listed as the person administering tests
- * Progress Note signature line

For further clarification or questions, contact the Board office.