



# MARYLAND Department of Health

Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists

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## **Clarity for Licensees and for the Public – A Letter from the Chair**

**October 2019**

In my May letter, I quoted Brene Brown who said, “*Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.*” My commitment as your Board Chair, shared by the Board, is to disseminate to licensees as clear information as possible, which was not always done in the past. I am well aware that at times, Board staff provided conflicting answers to the same question, and am as frustrated as some of you that sometimes inaccurate information was provided to licensees. I acknowledge this as a first step to correcting it, but promise during my tenure it will not be left there. Kimberly Link, our Executive Director, is working diligently with staff, some of whom have worked for the Board for over 20 years, to determine what incorrect information still haunts us, and what information is still unclear, to ensure we provide accurate information going forward in our mission to create a kind, connected relationship with you, and the public who we serve. Let’s leave the haunting to the Halloween Trick or Treaters in a few weeks!

As clinicians, presenting clear and accurate information to the public is not just kind, but part of our ethical duty. Most people don’t know the meaning of the letters after our names, our titles, or the difference between different types of license; adding spurious letters only worsens the confusion. It has come to our attention that some therapists and counselors may be representing themselves to the public inaccurately, and one purpose of this letter is to help you correct such inaccuracies. Please review your websites, online search profiles (e.g., Psychology Today, etc.) and all other forms of marketing to be sure your information is being accurately represented to the public. (See below for more detail).

Keeping up to date on legal requirements can be challenging. Please be aware, the Board isn’t allowed to interpret laws, regulations, and statutes (e.g., the “Red Flag” law, teletherapy regulations, etc.) for licensees, so we can only provide the general guidance and resources for you.

At our next scheduled Board meeting on October 18<sup>th</sup>, we will hold our annual elections for the Executive Committee (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary). While I do plan to run for a third one-year term as Chair, I may not win ☺. If the outcome of the elections is in my favor, I commit to continuing our mission to improve communication between the Board and Licensees, to increase transparency wherever possible, to have clear and efficient processes for obtaining licensure, all in service of our joint mission to serve

and protect the constituents of Maryland who seek our services.

Whatever the outcome, we will keep you informed of the outcome of the elections by sending out a quick note announcing the results. Stay tuned!

Thank you for the work you do every day to support the mental health of Maryland citizens. May we all enjoy the cooler fall weather when it finally arrives and may we all have more peaceful, kind interactions in everything we endeavor to do.

Risa Ganel, LCMFT, Board Chair

Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists

Read on for important points of clarity on several important issues on how you represent yourself to the public, how you provide services (teletherapy), and how you keep in touch with the Board.

### **1. Approved Supervisors:**

It has come to our attention that many licensees who are also Board-approved supervisors are so indicating by adding an “S” after their credential, e.g., “LCPC-S,” “CAC-AD-S,” “LCADC-S,” etc. We understand that some of you were previously instructed to do so by Board staff.

**Please be advised that approved supervisor status is not a separate credential issued by the Board. Therefore, it is not appropriate to add an “S” after one’s credential. Licensees or certificate holders who obtained Board approval to perform supervision may indicate their approved supervisor status as follows (depending on your license/certificate):**

- Name (as it appears on your license or cert.), LCPC, Board-Approved Supervisor
- Name, LCPAT, Board-Approved Supervisor
- Name, LCMFT, Board-Approved Supervisor
- Name, LCADC, Board-Approved Alcohol and Drug Counselor Supervisor
- Name, CAC-AD, Board-Approved Alcohol and Drug Counselor Supervisor

Verification of supervisory status is available on our website or by calling the Board. Each approved supervisor is responsible for accurately representing who they are approved to supervise. It isn’t necessary to indicate after one’s name the specific credential(s) one is approved to supervise, as that may confuse the public or those seeking an approved supervisor for clinical experience hours.

### **2. Applications and Other Forms:**

The Board has updated many of the forms needed for licensure as part of our current mission to make information accurate and up to date. **When completing forms for the Board, please download those directly from our website ([www.health.maryland.gov/bopc](http://www.health.maryland.gov/bopc)),** rather than using a search engine to find a specific form. Forms retrieved using a search engine may not be the most current version. If you submit an outdated form, Board staff will notify you and ask you to resubmit using the most recent version of that form.

Note that your license number will be issued and entered in the database in the name you provide on your application, which must be the name you use to represent yourself in your professional endeavors (website, letterhead, ads, etc.).

**3. Maryland’s “Red Flag” Law:**

The Board has received inquiries regarding extreme-risk protection orders or the “Red Flag” law. **Please note that the Board is not permitted to interpret the law or to advise as to how the law applies to a particular set of circumstances.** The Board recommends that you visit <https://mdcourts.gov/district/ERPO#how> for information regarding extreme risk protective orders.

**4. Teletherapy Regulations:**

The teletherapy regulations (COMAR 10.58.06) are in effect and can be found on the Board’s website under “Laws and Regulations.” Please review these regulations carefully and consult your professional association, insurance carrier, and/or independent counsel if you have questions regarding best practices and/or the regulations.

The Board cannot advise on the laws and regulations of other jurisdictions, and thus encourages licensees who intend to provide teletherapy to clients in other jurisdictions to consult the laws and regulations of those jurisdictions to ensure they permit teletherapy. Some jurisdictions may consider a Maryland licensee’s provision of teletherapy services in their jurisdiction to be unlicensed practice.

**5. Providing Up-to-Date Contact Information:**

Please make sure the Board has your current email address, as virtually all notifications are sent via email. If you have colleagues who didn’t get this or past letters from the Board, they should contact the Board to verify their email address.

**Please do not reply to this email.**

(10/02/2019)