PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNICIANS' ACTIVITIES AND THEIR REPRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC

Oklahoma State Board of Examiners of Psychologists

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 discretional. Discretional decision-making is reserved for the psychologist (i.e., clinician), and non-discretional decision-making (i.e., procedural) is appropriate for the psychological technician. The psychological technician ASSISTS the psychologist and is NOT independent in providing services. Discretional 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, the activities and services to be provided are carefully studied to ensure they are NOT discretional in nature, and whether the individual has the qualifying academic training and work experience related to those activities and services.

INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES:
Activities and services consistently rejected by the Board involve discretional decision-making. The following are noninclusive examples:

- Administration, scoring, and 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 regarding the type of decision-making level assigned is unclear. Greater specificity on the application usually would not have resulted in a delay. Noninclusive examples of questioned activities follow:

- Administer psychological tests[1]
- Conduct psychometric assessment[1]
- Perform psychoeducational assessment[1]
- Administer neuropsychological tests[1]
- Provide consultation to parent/teachers[2]
- Provide evaluation feedback to clients[2]

[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 qualifying education and training in the area, as provided in Board Rules, include:

Technicians *without* a Master's level degree in the field of mental health are limited to:

- Performing psychological or neuropsychological tests (administration and scoring) defined ahead of time by the supervisor.

Technicians *with* Master level degrees in the field of mental health can person psychological procedures outside of test administration and scoring that has been previously approved by the Board on record, while under supervision:

- 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
- Documentation in client/patient chart of date, length, and nature of service (i.e., descriptive/factual progress notes)
- Report test scores without decision-making to parents and teacher in MEEGS meetings (Multi Educational Evaluation Group Summary) only. These results will only be provided when the psychologist has reviewed the results with the psychological technician, which will provide data without further interpretation
- Participation in IHP/IEP meetings conveying the psychologist's recommendations (only Psychological Technicians who have achieved and maintain certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) or who have completed the DDS Certification Program)

Please note: At its meeting on July 21, 2023, the Board voted to adopt the following statement regarding psychological technicians' participation in an IHP/IEP:*"The Psychological Technician does not meet the formal qualification as a qualified examiner under the federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Therefore, the psychological technician will refer all questions concerning anything about the report, including scores, interpretation, and diagnosis, back to the psychologist supervisor, regardless of where and when the question originates. The psychological technician's level of participation in the federally-compliant school-based multidisciplinary team evaluation meetings and IEP meetings is to read the recommendations from the psychologist's report and nothing more. The psychological technician cannot expand or elaborate on the interpretation of the report as this would be beyond their level of expertise*

REPRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC:

Psychological technicians must NOT represent themselves, in any manner, as an independent practitioner. The supervising psychologist shall NOT permit the technician to represent him/herself as an independent practitioner to the public. 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:

- Letterhead, Announcements, Telephone Directory, etc.
- Office Directory or 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 – only if listed as the person administering tests
- Progress Note signature line
- Business Cards in a Board approved format, as illustrated below:

For further clarification or questions, contact the Board office.