



Optimal Treatment for Anxiety & Mental Health

An Introduction to Board Certification
for Clinical Psychologists

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OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to...

1. **Articulate** the structure and function of the American Board of Professional Psychology, the general requirements of board certification and a basic understanding of specialty requirements.
2. **Evaluate** how board certification may relate to one's own professional goals as a psychologist.
3. **Develop** a plan to achieve board certification in a specialty of their choice if in line with their professional goals.

Overview

- ABPP and the Specialty Boards Structure
- Advantages, Costs, and Considerations associated with Board Certification
- Developing a Plan to Successfully Pass Board Examination



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How long have you been practicing psychology?

Currently unlicensed

1-2 years

2-5 years

6-10 years

10 or more years

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What are reasons you are interested in pursuing board certification?

Top

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What are barriers you perceive to board certification?

Top

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Which specialty boards are you interested in?

- Addiction
- Behavioral and Cognitive
- Clinical Child and Adolescent
- Clinical Health
- Clinical Neuropsychology
- Clinical
- Counseling
- Couple & Family
- Forensic
- Geropsychology
- Group
- Organizational and Business
- Police and Public Safety
- Psychoanalysis
- Rehabilitation
- School
- Serious Mental Illness

American Board of Professional Psychology

- 17 specialty boards and 1 subspecialty board
 - *Serious Mental Illness is not fully affiliated (cannot use “ABPP”)*
- 9 have unique academies
- 39 states offer some type of reciprocity in licensure
 - 50% of all states offer full or near-full reciprocity
 - Eligible for board certification ~2-3 years earlier than other mobility tools

ABPP General Requirements

- Doctoral degree (PhD, PsyD, EdD) from regionally accredited University in U.S. or Canada
 - *If later than 2018 must be APA/CPA accredited*
 - *If prior to 2018, non-APA/CPA or ASPPB/NR programs require special review*
- Clinical internship
 - *After 2020 must be APA/CPA Accredited unless initial application has been submitted prior to 2021 and internship will be completed by 2026*
 - *Prior to this, non-APPIC internships require special review*
- Licensed for independent practice in U.S. or Canada
- International applicants encouraged to speak directly with ABPP

ABPP Specialty Specific Requirements

- Vary from board to board, but generally...
 - *One year of a formal post-doc or two years of formal practice in the domain of specialty*
 - *Coursework, professional membership identity in domain of specialty*
- Neuropsychology requirements are more formalized in both coursework and post-doctoral experience
- Counseling psychology expects counseling psychology doctorate OR evidence of identity/training as a counseling psychologist
- Forensic psychology requires **five** years experience if not in a formal post-doc, some boards require **three** years of experience
- Some boards have “senior” option (e.g., Clinical, Group, Psychoanalysis), generally reserved for providers with ~15+ years of experience

ABPP Process

- Identify the board of interest
- Complete general application
- Complete specialty specific application
- Specialty specific practice sample (details vary)
- Specialty specific oral exam
 - *Written exam in Clinical/Pediatric Neuropsychology and Forensic*
- Congrats! You are Board Certified!

Identifying Board of Interest

- What was your primary focus in graduate school?
- What professional memberships do you hold?
- What are your professional goals?
- What post-doctoral experiences have you had?
- Most boards are eager to recruit members with genuine interest, will work with you to meet specialty specific requirements

Practice Sample

- Exact details vary by board
- Written professional statement
 - *Bite off in “chunks”*
- Videotaped practice samples
 - *Must be within 6 months of final submission of sample*
 - *Often specify particular domains of your practice*

Oral Exam

- Exact details vary by board
- Some boards (e.g., Clinical Health) are known for more structure
- COVID impacted delivery of in-person v. virtual, many now have hybrid scheduling
- This part can take the longest to schedule (sometimes even a full year)
- Although the most anxiety provoking, remember the standard is often independent practice of 2-3+ years

ABPP Fees

- \$125 for initial application
 - *\$25 for “early entry” – not yet licensed*
 - *\$65 for early career psychologists (<10 years post-doc, but licensed)*
 - *Waived for additional boards or if an APA/CPA accredited training director*
- \$250 for practice sample
- \$450 for oral exam
- \$300 for written exam (CN)/\$550 for written exam (FP)
- Annual fee (slight increase for add’t boards)

Questions?

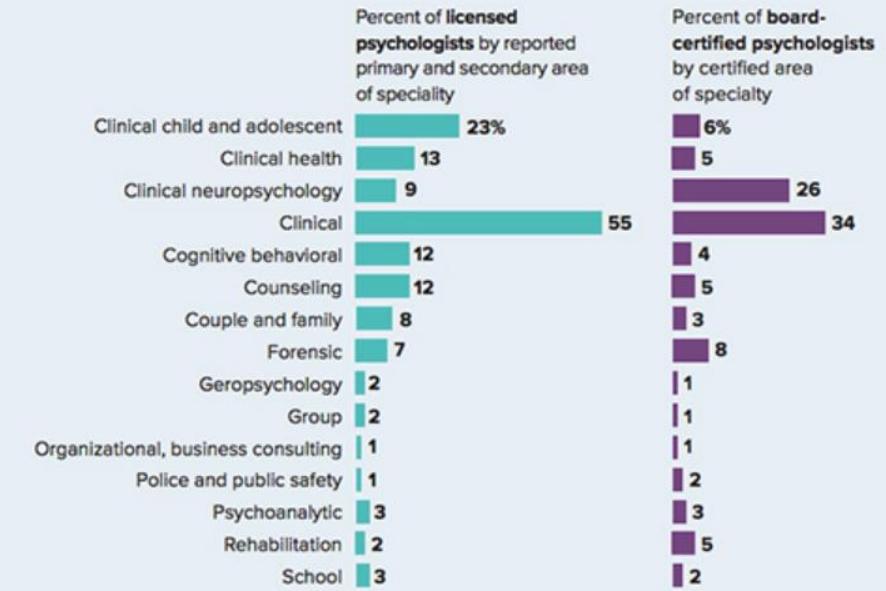
5 min break

ABPP Fast Facts

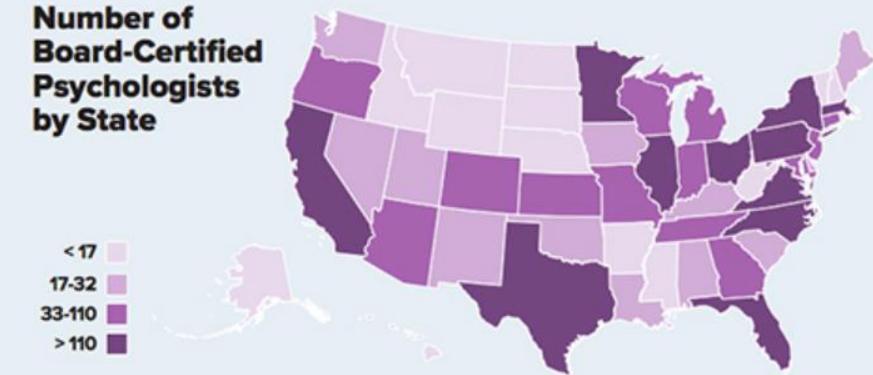
- ~4,000 board certified psychologists (<~4% of all psychologists)
- ~0.5% of all psychologists hold more than one board
- 1/3 of all board-certified psychologists - Clinical Psychology
- 1/4 of all board-certified psychologists – Clinical Neuropsychology

Lin, Christidis, & Stamm, 2017

Licensed Psychologists and Board-Certified Psychologists by Area of Specialty



Number of Board-Certified Psychologists by State



Advantages and Considerations

- Some organizations provide bonuses (e.g., DoD, VHA)
- Higher income in some specialties (e.g., Clinical Neuropsychology)
- Licensure mobility
- Professional service, publications, income satisfaction rated higher
- Modeling for supervision and training
 - *50% of students reported never being observed conducting psychotherapy*
- Opportunity for reflective practice and elevation of practice

Iwanicki & Peterson, 2017; Rodriguez-Menedez et al., 2017; Sweet et al., 2021

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Need for Representation

- 83.6% of board-certified psychologists hold PhDs
- 68.7% of board-certified psychologists are senior psychologists
- 86.7% non-Hispanic White
 - *Pediatric Neuropsychology and School Psychology had no non-Hispanic White psychologists respond to 2018 survey*
- Boards are seen as being interested in recruiting diversity, many specialties have mentoring options

Frost et al., 2018



Back to those barriers...

Frost et al., 2018

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Thinking about the barriers you listed earlier, would you say...

The barriers are less than I thought

The barriers are the same

The barriers are greater than I thought

I now think of different barriers

What are the barriers you are currently thinking of?

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Frost et al., 2018

Open Discussion

Developing a Plan for Success

- Reflect on your goals and pick a board that resonates
- Research the specialty requirements in detail
- Map out a timeline



Frost et al., 2018

Tips for Success

- Take advantage of mentorship
- Cultivate a curious attitude
- Check your imposter syndrome
- Separate requirements into discrete chunks
- Consider grants and scholarships (ABPP, professional societies)

Frost et al., 2018

Summary

- Board certification is a manageable process and opportunity to deepen your professional career
- Financial, satisfaction, and career benefits
- Knowing the process, engaging with the process is key to success
- The goal is to advance the profession, not gatekeep it

Questions?

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