

terview? (p. 59). Replies range from never to constantly. This question, which at first would seem to be anathema to what therapy has become in the last 20 years, is really insightful in that it reaches toward the heart of therapist-client involvements, including therapist needs.

Are there certain kinds of patients whom one should not even try to treat? Is there something in oneself that stops working when faced with these patients? Further, should the therapist not consider not dealing with some of the people he or she finds most gratifying? (p. 64). The answers are that basically there are not such patients save those who are unsure as to why they want therapy. These answers are unsatisfying. I would like more responses and greater depth as this is a difficult and important question, especially for counselors who often are compelled to see clients with no alternatives for referral.

How significant is calendar time in emotional development or psychological maturing? Is there something like an emotional gestation period? Does the therapist need to accompany the patient through a period of gestation no matter how long it takes?

(p. 65). The responses are that the passage of time is necessary because small steps collect, but there are also spontaneous quantum leaps. The replies are thoughtful and support the deliberate and careful growth of therapeutic output. The answers are comforting.

What is the significance of a belief in God on the effectiveness of a therapist? (p. 70). The respondents agree that such belief is very significant for their work as therapists. I did not find these responses balanced nor of much depth and I would like to hear from an atheist therapist.

As you have experienced changes in your life patterns, have you seen patients who then began to struggle with similar dynamics in themselves? To what degree, then, might you unconsciously be modeling specific therapeutic change for the patient? (p. 72). The respondents agreed as to the similarities in dynamics, but they did not believe that they had modeled the patterns. Rather, they thought that as they broadened and deepened themselves they allowed clients to do the same. The depth in the replies to this question could be helpful for counse-

lors who strive to understand their effect on clients.

The sum of the questions and answers leaves me feeling that I now know a great deal more about therapy. The writers have offered a great deal for both the sophisticated and the naive counselor. Reading these answers provides help, illumination, and encouragement. This issue of *Voices* does that constantly by guiding and informing readers as well as granting permission to explore and question their work.

Just as this issue of *Voices* on John Warkentin aids counselors, the journal itself does so. The power in the contributions energizes the reader. Commitment to counseling is often strained; *Voices* alleviates that tension, replacing it with understanding and joy. In a time when counselors ought to be challenged, *Voices* does just that.

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Licensure in Counseling: An Alternative Direction

Bernstein, B.L., & Lecomte, C. Licensure in Psychology: Alternative Directions. *Professional Psychology*, 1981, 12, 200-208.

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Counselor licensure has become an issue of ever-increasing importance for the counseling profession. Most recently, Florida has joined Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, and Virginia as states currently requiring that counselors be licensed. Another 20 states have written draft bills. Over 40 states have their

own licensure committees initiating efforts to educate local practitioners about licensure and related credentialing issues. Counselor licensure, following the course of medicine and psychology, marks the evolution of counseling from an occupation to a profession (Davis, 1981). Still in its infancy, will

counselor licensure take the same routes traveled by psychology? Similar in scope, an analysis of relevant issues regarding psychologist licensure can be critical to future counselor licensure outcomes. Much can be gained from examining psychology's experiences.

In a most informative article, Bernstein and Lecomte critique existing psychologist-licensing regulations by reexamining some of the assumptions frequently seen as implicit in the development of professional licensing procedures. The implications for professional psychology are discussed and guidelines for alternative licensure development are presented.

THE LICENSURE LEGEND?

The dictionary defines *legend* as "a tale, or body of tales, coming down from the past, especially one popularly accepted as historical though not verifiable." According to Levin (1959):

"There are two ways of looking at a fiction (legend): we can consider it as a deviation from fact or as an approximation to fact. Fact must always be the criteria; and when the facts are under control, we emphasize the degree of deviation; but when we are out of touch with the facts, we utilize fiction to explain the unexplainable by some sort of approximation to it." (p. 105)

Bernstein and Lecomte challenge the validity of a number of basic assumptions related to psychologist licensure, all of which suggest that current licensing procedures find their foundation in legend.

1 *Licensure protects the public.* Based on objective data, this appears to be more fiction than fact. Little or no data has been presented to confirm that current licensure regulations do in fact prevent abuse or assure professional competence (Koocher, 1979). Bernstein and Lecomte suggest that evidence concerning deterioration effects and increasing numbers of malpractice suits appear to reinforce the position that licensing in its present form does not necessarily guarantee client welfare. Gross (1978) supports this proposal in asserting that "mainly research refutes the claim that licensing protects the public" (p. 1009).

2 *Licensing criteria directly relate to client outcomes.* Although multiple criteria (e.g., scores on the national Examination of Professional Practice in Psychology, the level of graduate degree held, or preparation in primarily psychological program) are used by psychology licensing boards for granting licenses to some and not to others, the authors note that there are no data to

support the predictive validity of these measures as related to client outcomes. Rather, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting otherwise. For example, a number of studies (cf. Bergin & Lambert, 1978) have shown the effectiveness of informed nonprofessionals in promoting client improvement.

3 *Initial licensure assures continuing competence.* Bernstein and Lecomte note that although 15 states have continuing education requirements for psychologist license renewal, actual updating of skills remains assumed. These authors state in this regard:

"The mere accumulation of "brownie points" through attendance at courses and meetings assesses neither the learning and maturing that occur with length of professional experience nor the acquired knowledge of new techniques and new scientific findings." (p. 202)

Thus, must counseling follow psychology in believing in legends about licensing? Or, can it take a bold new path? Bernstein and Lecomte's proposal for an ideal licensure model provides this alternative.

A MODEL FOR COUNSELOR LICENSURE

The criticisms of licensure can be taken to imply that licensure itself is unsatisfactory. From an empirical standpoint, however, no data has been generated to prove whether it is merely the current licensing process that is faulty or whether licensure itself is inherently defective. Bernstein and Lecomte propose that it would seem more desirable to hypothesize that licensure is an appropriate vehicle for protecting consumers. They suggest the need for changes in the regulatory process rather than the regulation act itself. In doing so, they stressed the development of a long-range plan, emphasizing three main points: (a) licensing procedures should be based on empirical evidence that demonstrates the relationship between entrance criteria and client outcomes; (b) to establish such validating procedures, a large body of data must be collected from a comprehensive research program specifically designed to answer such questions; and (c) in order to plan such a research program, a model must be developed outlining an ideal licensing system.

Bernstein and Lecomte present their proposal for an ideal licensing model for evaluating the effectiveness of entry-level practitioners and their continuing effectiveness and for protecting the public interest. The following represent selected elements of this competency-based approach as they apply to potential counselor licensure:

1 Individuals applying for entry-level licenses will be reviewed on a range of factors that have demonstrable relationships to positive client outcomes.

2 All individuals desiring to be licensed will be reviewed. In the absence of data indicating a direct relationship between such factors as degree level or type of preparation program with client outcomes, these characteristics will not be taken into account.

3 If research efforts verify different patterns of necessary competencies for different subspecialties within counseling, licensing standards will reflect these differences. Individuals would be reviewed separately for each specialty area, with the possibility that one would be licensed in several areas of specialization.

4 Licenses will be required to be renewed after a period of 6 months or 1 year for new licenses, to be followed by regular renewal every 2 or 3 years thereafter. Renewal will be based on a review of validated client outcome indicators. Continuing education, although encouraged, will affect license renewal only to the extent that it assists the counselor in promoting continued positive outcomes for clients.

5 Licensed persons will be required to provide professional disclosure materials to include academic and professional background, licenses held, approaches used, types of problems treated, and clients' improvement rates. These materials would be updated annually and filed with the licensing board. (Gill [1982] provides an extensive look at professional disclosure as it relates to counseling.)

6 Preparation programs will be required also to engage in professional disclosure activities. Programs preparing persons to enter or reenter the counseling profession will be required to disclose to potential students its graduates' rate of success in attaining and maintaining counseling licenses. Using these program disclosure statements, students can make more informed choices among various programs available. Further, such a

system is likely to facilitate program improvement where called for.

7 Concentrated efforts to educate the public about counseling and the licensing process will take place. What is known about counseling, licensing regulations, sources of disclosure statements, grievances, and further relevant information will be prepared and made available to all potential clients and students.

CONCLUSION

Bernstein and Lecomte propose that the success of their licensure model essentially depends on the establishment of

reliable relationships between practitioner characteristics or skills and client outcomes. Counseling would seem to be in a position at present to begin to focus licensing efforts in such a direction and carry out research to further validate already agreed-upon competencies and identify additional ones. Counselor licensure does not have to be based on legend. Objectively observable fact should form its foundation.

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