

Board of Counseling

Scopes of Practice for Persons Regulated by the Board to provide Substance Abuse Treatment

The Code of Virginia § 54.1-3500 defines “counseling” as “the application of principles, standards, and methods of the counseling profession in (i) conducting assessments and diagnoses for the purpose of establishing treatment goals and objectives and (ii) planning, implementing, and evaluating treatment plans using treatment interventions to facilitate human development and to identify and remediate mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses that interfere with mental health.”

The Code of Virginia § 54.1-3500 defines "Substance abuse treatment" as “(i) the application of specific knowledge, skills, substance abuse treatment theory, and substance abuse treatment techniques to define goals and develop a treatment plan of action regarding substance abuse or dependence prevention, education, or treatment in the substance abuse or dependence recovery process and (ii) referrals to medical, social services, psychological, psychiatric, or legal resources when such referrals are indicated.”

License Required

The Code of Virginia § 54.1-3506 requires a license to engage in the practice of counseling, marriage and family therapy, or the independent practice of substance abuse treatment. The scopes of practice for Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) include counseling and substance abuse treatment. No other license or certification is required for these licensees to perform these functions.

Scope of Practice for a Licensed Substance Abuse Treatment Practitioner (LSATP)

The scope of practice for a Licensed Substance Abuse Treatment Practitioner (LSATP) is defined in § 54.1-3507, which states that: “A licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner shall be qualified to (i) perform on an independent basis the substance abuse treatment functions of screening, intake, orientation, assessment, treatment planning, treatment, case management, substance abuse or dependence crisis intervention, client education, referral activities, recordkeeping, and consultation with other professionals; (ii) exercise independent professional judgment, based on observations and objective assessments of a client's behavior, to evaluate current functioning, to diagnose and select appropriate remedial treatment for identified problems, and to make appropriate referrals; and (iii) supervise, direct and instruct others who provide substance abuse treatment.”

Scope of Practice for a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC)

The scope of practice for a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor is defined in § 54.1-3507.1, which states that: “A certified substance abuse counselor shall be (i) qualified to perform, under appropriate supervision or direction, the substance abuse treatment functions of screening, intake, orientation, the administration of substance abuse assessment instruments, recovery and

relapse prevention planning, substance abuse treatment, case management, substance abuse or dependence crisis intervention, client education, referral activities, record keeping, and consultation with other professionals; (ii) qualified to be responsible for client care of persons with a primary diagnosis of substance abuse or dependence; and (iii) qualified to supervise, direct and instruct certified substance abuse counseling assistants. Certified substance abuse counselors shall not engage in independent or autonomous practice. ”

Scope of Practice for a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor Assistant (CSAC-A)

The scope of practice for Certified Substance Abuse Counselor Assistants is defined in § 54.1-3507.2, which states that: “A certified substance abuse counseling assistant shall be qualified to perform, under appropriate supervision or direction, the substance abuse treatment functions of orientation, implementation of substance abuse treatment plans, case management, substance abuse or dependence crisis intervention, record keeping, and consultation with other professionals. Certified substance abuse counseling assistants may participate in recovery group discussions, but shall not engage in counseling with either individuals or groups or engage in independent or autonomous practice.”

Scope of Practice for a Peer Recovery Specialist

Code of Virginia § 54.1-3500 defines a peer recovery specialist is “a person who by education and experience is professionally qualified in accordance with 12VAC35-20 to provide collaborative services to assist individuals in achieving sustained recovery from the effects of mental illness, addiction, or both. A registered peer recovery specialist (RPRS) shall provide such services as an employee or independent contractor of DBHDS, a provider licensed by DBHDS, a practitioner licensed by or holding a permit issued from the Department of Health Professions, or a facility licensed by the Department of Health.”

A peer recovery specialist offers support and assistance in helping others in the recovery and community-integration process.

Clarifying Information

The scope of practice for CSACs includes substance abuse counseling with individuals and groups. The Code of Virginia § 54.1-3507.1 indicates that CSACs are “qualified to be responsible for client care of persons with a primary diagnosis of substance abuse or dependence.” Providing counseling to persons for a mental health diagnosis other than substance abuse or dependency is outside the scope of practice for CSACs.

A “diagnostic” assessment and a “multidimensional” assessment, conducted according to criteria of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, are both required for Medicaid reimbursement for services. CSACs are not allowed to do a diagnostic assessment but are allowed to do the multidimensional assessment to make recommendations for a level of care that must then be signed off on or approved by a licensed professional who is supervising the CSAC.

The Board of Counseling interprets the function of “record keeping” to include the gathering of demographic information. CSAC-As can perform this function as within their scope of practice. However, CSAC-As cannot perform the function of intake or screening. Only a CSAC, LSATP, LPC, or LMFT shall perform these functions.

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	LPC	LMFT	LSATP	CSAC	CSAC-A
Provide Substance Abuse Treatment Independently	yes	yes	yes	No	No
Perform only under supervision of Licensed Mental Health Professional				Yes	Yes
Screening	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Intake	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Orientation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Administration of Substance Abuse Assessment Instruments	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Recovery and relapse Prevention Planning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Diagnostic Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Multidimensional Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Treatment Planning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Substance Abuse Treatment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Implementation of Substance Abuse Treatment Plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Case Management	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Substance Abuse or dependence crisis intervention	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Client Education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Referral Activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Recordkeeping	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consultation with other Professionals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exercise Independent Professional Judgment, to evaluate current functioning	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Exercise Independent Professional Judgment to diagnose and select appropriate remedial treatment for identified problems	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Exercise Independent Professional judgment to make appropriate referrals	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Supervise, Direct and Instruct others who provide Substance Abuse Treatment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (Only CSAC-A's)	No
Provide Independent Substance Abuse Counseling	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Provide counseling to persons with for a Mental Health Diagnosis other than Substance Abuse	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Coordinate, Facilitate, Participate in Recovery Group Discussions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lead Recovery Group Discussions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Substance Abuse Counseling with Individuals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Substance Abuse Counseling with Groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Supervision Requirements for Persons Providing Substance Abuse Treatment Pursuant to Code of Virginia 54.1-3500 et.seq.

	Independent	Authority to Supervise, Direct, or Instruct	Required to be under the Supervision of:
LMHP*	Yes	Yes	Not required
LSATP	Yes	Yes	Not required
LSATP Applicant	No (Must practice under supervision)	No	LSATP or LMHP
CSAC	No (Must practice under supervision)	Only CSAC-As and CSAC Applicants	LSATP or LMHP
CSAC Applicant	No (Must practice under supervision)	No	LSATP, LMHP, or CSAC
CSAC-A	No (Must practice under supervision)	No	LSATP, LMHP, or CSAC
CSAC-A Applicant	No (Must practice under supervision)	No	LSATP, LMHP, or CSAC

*LMHP means a Licensed Mental Health Provider and includes Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs), Licensed Clinical Psychologists (LCPs), and Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)