



Competency Guidelines

ENDORSED BY:



Chai Lifeline



NEFESH International regards the conduct of psychotherapy as a responsibility with serious, professional and ethical obligations to the client. This responsibility should always be uppermost in the mind of the therapist, as he/she seeks to offer the best service he can to his client.

In an effort to improve the quality of mental health services provided to the Torah community, the Board of Directors of NEFESH International has set forth the following recommended standards for practitioners beginning a private practice in mental health services.

EDUCATION

The beginning private practitioner should have – at minimum – a masters level graduate degree in a clinical mental health field from an accredited school.

Continuing education and training are essential for maintaining and increasing competence in the provision of mental health services. It is therefore expected that the practitioner will be actively engaged in these activities.

LICENSURE

The therapist should be licensed in the state in which services are offered. This license should permit independent practice on the part of the practitioner. For example, a social worker should be licensed as an LCSW; a mental health counselor, as an LMHC.

Psychiatrists should be licensed in the state in which services are offered.

INSURANCE

The therapist should hold a professional liability insurance policy to protect his client and him/herself.

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EXPERIENCE

The amount of prior clinical experience required to conduct a private practice should be dictated by the extent of graduate education.

Masters level clinicians (e.g. MA, LMSW, LMHC's, and LPC's) should have completed 5 years of 30 hrs/wk of clinical work. Psychologists with doctoral degrees (e.g., Ph.D. or Psy.D.) should have 3 years post licensure of 30 hrs/wk of clinical work doing psychotherapy.

Psychiatrists should have completed a residency program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education in the field of psychiatry.

SUPERVISION

The clinician should have ongoing, individual, clinical supervision for at least 10 years into her/his practice by a licensed clinician with extensive experience. There is no substitute for individual supervision and no one who does not need it. In fact, ongoing supervision should continue throughout one's career at a level appropriate to experience and competence.

COMPETENCE

The heavy responsibility carried by the mental health professional requires that services be provided within the boundaries of her/his competence, based on his/her education, training, supervised experience, and study. The practitioner should avoid false self-confidence and hubris by being aware of her/his own limitations. When a clinical presentation exceeds the bounds of his/her competence, the ethical therapist should refer to another professional whom the therapist knows to be competent in the problem area at issue. In case of doubt, collegial consultation is strongly encouraged.

A professional's level and area of competence must never be misrepresented.

PERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

A professional's own course of psychotherapy is invaluable in the acquisition of skill, crucial insight into her/himself, and an understanding of the client's experience.

RABBINIC CONSULTATION

Every therapist should have a *rav* with whom he/she feels comfortable consulting concerning *halachic* issues.