behavioral & cognitive psychology defined:

The American Board of Behavioral & Cognitive Psychology (ABBCP) was incorporated in 1987 with assistance from the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT). ABBCP’s mission is to certify psychologists at a specialty level of professional competence in Behavioral & Cognitive Psychology, which includes the sub areas of:

1) Applied Behavior Analysis;
2) Behavior Therapy;
3) Behavior-Cognitive Therapy & Modification, and
4) Cognitive Therapy.

In 1992, ABBCP became an affiliate board of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) and currently operates under its guidelines.

Behavioral & Cognitive Psychology

Behavioral & Cognitive psychology encompasses a variety of cognitive, behavioral-cognitive, and social learning procedures. It is empirically based in principles of learning and development and stresses the importance of observable behavior including cognitive behavior. It is primarily present-focused, active in nature, and often carried out in the natural environment

Certification in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology

Board certification assures the public and the profession that the specialist in behavioral & cognitive psychology has met the education, training and experience requirements, as well as demonstrating the advanced competencies required by the specialty through an individualized, peer reviewed examination. The examination encompasses the following interrelated domains of professional competency.

**ABBCP functional competencies:**

- Assessment. Defining, diagnosing, and conceptualizing problems and issues associated with individuals, groups, and/or organizations based on behavioral & cognitive psychology principles.
- Intervention. Developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions designed to produce positive change based on behavioral & cognitive psychology principles.
- Consultation. Providing expert guidance or professional assistance to a consultee’s needs or goals based on behavioral & cognitive psychology principles.
- Research/Evaluation. Generating behavioral and cognitive psychology research that contributes to the professional knowledge base and/or evaluating the effectiveness of various professional activities.
- Professional Identification. Meaningful involvement with the specialty of behavioral and cognitive psychology as documented by membership in one or more specialty organizations (e.g. ABCT, ABA) and appropriate continuing education activities.

**Optional functional competences include:**

- Supervision. Supervision and training in the professional knowledge base of behavioral & cognitive psychology principles and of evaluation of the effectiveness of various professional activities.
- Teaching. Providing instruction, disseminating knowledge, and evaluating acquisition of knowledge and skill related to behavioral and cognitive psychology.
- Management-Administration: Manage the direct delivery of services and/or the administration of organizations, programs, or agencies in areas of behavioral and cognitive psychology.
- Advocacy: Actions targeting the impact of social, political, economic or cultural factors to promote change at the individual (client), institutional, and system level.

“**My initial expectation that the board process, particularly the oral examination, would be adversarial in nature or that certification required an intense, unpleasant interrogation designed to expose my flaws could not have been further from the truth. Persons associated with ABPP were generous and collegial in nature at every turn. I was given a contact/mentor who answered numerous questions about requirements for the practice sample and what to expect during the oral exam. Despite my own unwarranted anxiety, the oral exam was very pleasant and interesting. Though the purpose was to ensure that I had an explicit and coherent rationale for my work, the examination was conducted in a manner the conveyed respect and a sincere desire that I do well. In retrospect, it was a rare opportunity to talk with distinguished psychologists about the common work that we do.”**

- Robert Vanacek, PhD, ABPP

**Fees**

- $125 fee for application and credential review to establish candidacy.
- $250 fee for the practice sample review and establishment of the oral examination team.
- $450 for the oral examination.

These fees are due sequentially over the time span necessary to complete all of the candidacy and examination steps. Upon granting Board certification a yearly fee of $185 is assessed to support the many services of the ABPP and the representation of the organization to the public and the profession.
As a Board Certified Specialist in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology
You Can Attain

• National recognition
• Distinction in the field
• Enhanced collegiality
• Increased visibility

For more information and how to apply, visit
www.abpp.org and click on Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology under Member Specialty Boards

The specialty of Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology emphasizes an experimental-clinical approach to the application of the behavioral and cognitive sciences to understand human behavior and develop interventions that enhance the human condition. Behavioral and cognitive psychologists engage in research, education, training, and clinical practice regarding a wide range of problems and populations.

As professions become increasingly specialized, you can achieve specialty standing and become among the select in the field to be nationally recognized for your experience, expertise, research, and education as a Board Certified Specialist in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I know if I am qualified?
If you received specialty training in behavioral and cognitive psychology, conceptualize your clinical work, and hold a primary identity as a psychologist with expertise in using behavioral and cognitive psychology, you likely qualify to apply for board certification. Refer to the application instructions to see if you hold the minimal credentials to apply.

2. Why would I want to do all the work required to submit this application?
We frequently receive feedback that engaging in the process of applying to become board certified is thought provoking and useful, as it requires the candidate to critically analyze his/her clinical framework overall, drawing upon some case examples. The oral examination is a collegial, stimulating discussion that allows the candidate to demonstrate his/her fluency in applying up-to-date behavioral and cognitive science, theory, research, and practice into professional activities.

3. What will I gain from becoming credentialed by the American Board of Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology?
In your clinical work you will be able to educate consumers that you have advanced training in using behavioral and cognitive psychology, which can be reassuring since it is difficult for consumers to determine who is an expert in treating health and mental health issues. In addition, psychologists recognize the ABPP as a sign of excellence and are likely to refer to you.

TESTIMONIALS FROM BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIORAL AND COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGISTS

What motivated you to seek board certification in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology?
“My motivation to seek board certification was multifaceted. As a psychologist trained in the scientist-practitioner model, I am committed to achieving excellence in my scope of practice. Attaining the credentials that demonstrate my qualifications in the behavioral and cognitive psychology specialty area to the community became increasingly important. I identify as a behavioral and cognitive psychologist and I decided to attain that recognition from the most distinguished and well-respected specialty credentialing organization within the profession of psychology, the ABPP.”

What advice would you give to a candidate for board certification in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology?
“Start by simultaneously completing the initial paperwork, brushing up on technique, thinking about possible cases to present, and practice by doing these treatments consistently, if you’re not already doing so.”

What did you learn about yourself and your practice during the board certification process?
“The board certification process helped me to solidify my professional identity as a Behavioral and Cognitive Psychologist. It created a point of departure from the very cerebral and private process of understanding the kind of work I engage on a daily basis and, instead, to articulate it in writing and verbally in an interpersonal exchange. This process fostered clarity about where I’ve come in my development as a specialist in behavioral and cognitive psychology.”

BENEFITS OF ABPP CERTIFICATION

Why attain ABPP certification in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology?

• It is the "gold standard" of professional practice across disciplines
• Provides for potential increased financial and professional recognition
• Provides a clear recognition that psychology has become increasingly specialized and that one is an officially certified specialist in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology
• Addresses the increased demand for specialty credentials
• Reflects a specialty standard over basic licensure or licensure at the generalist level
• Earn 20 CE credits from the ABPP once board certification is complete
• Board Certification is recognized in the APA Membership directory and the National Register of Health Service Psychologists
• Board certification facilitates license mobility
• Many hospitals now require psychologists to have ABPP within 5 years of hire